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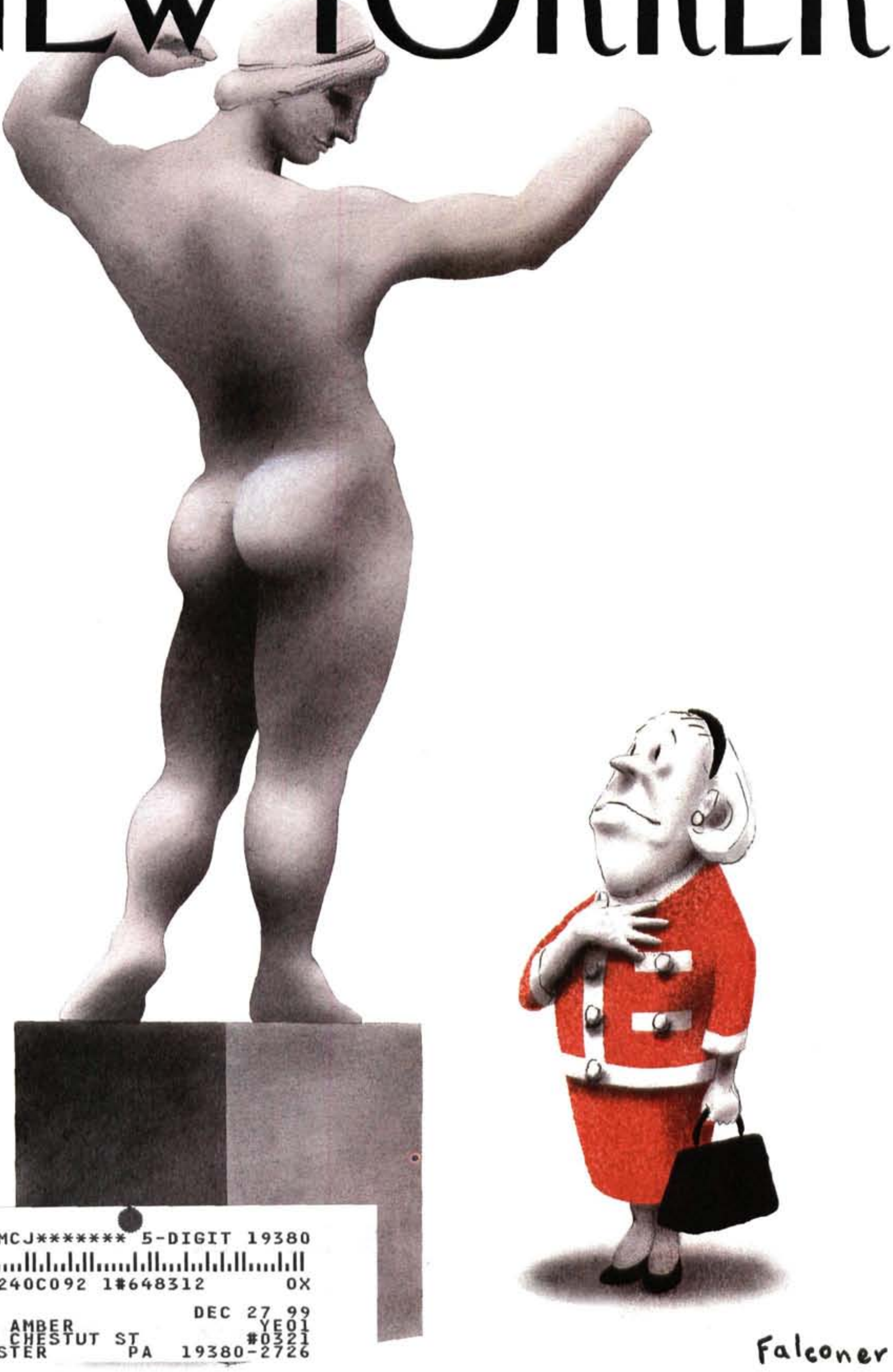

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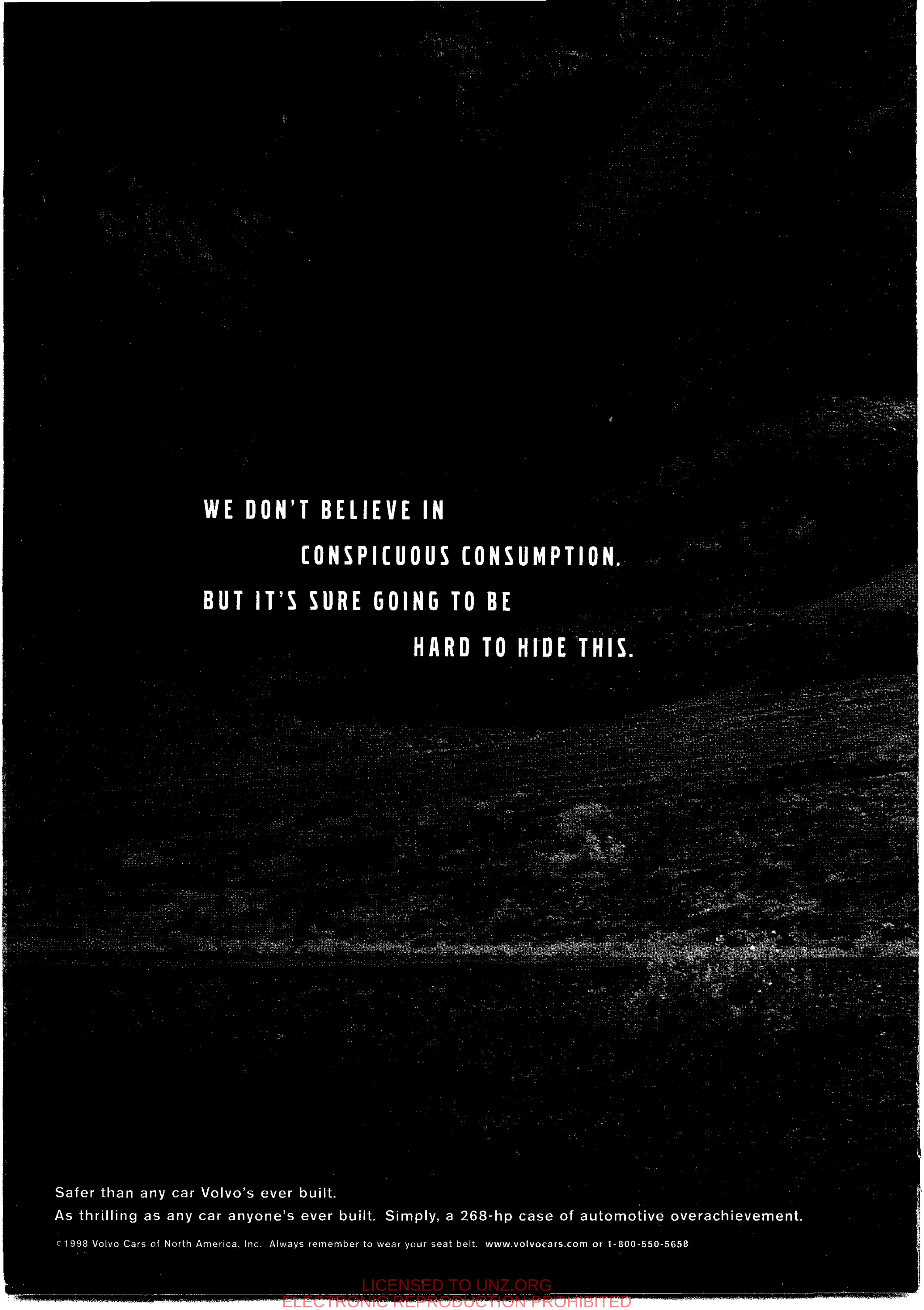
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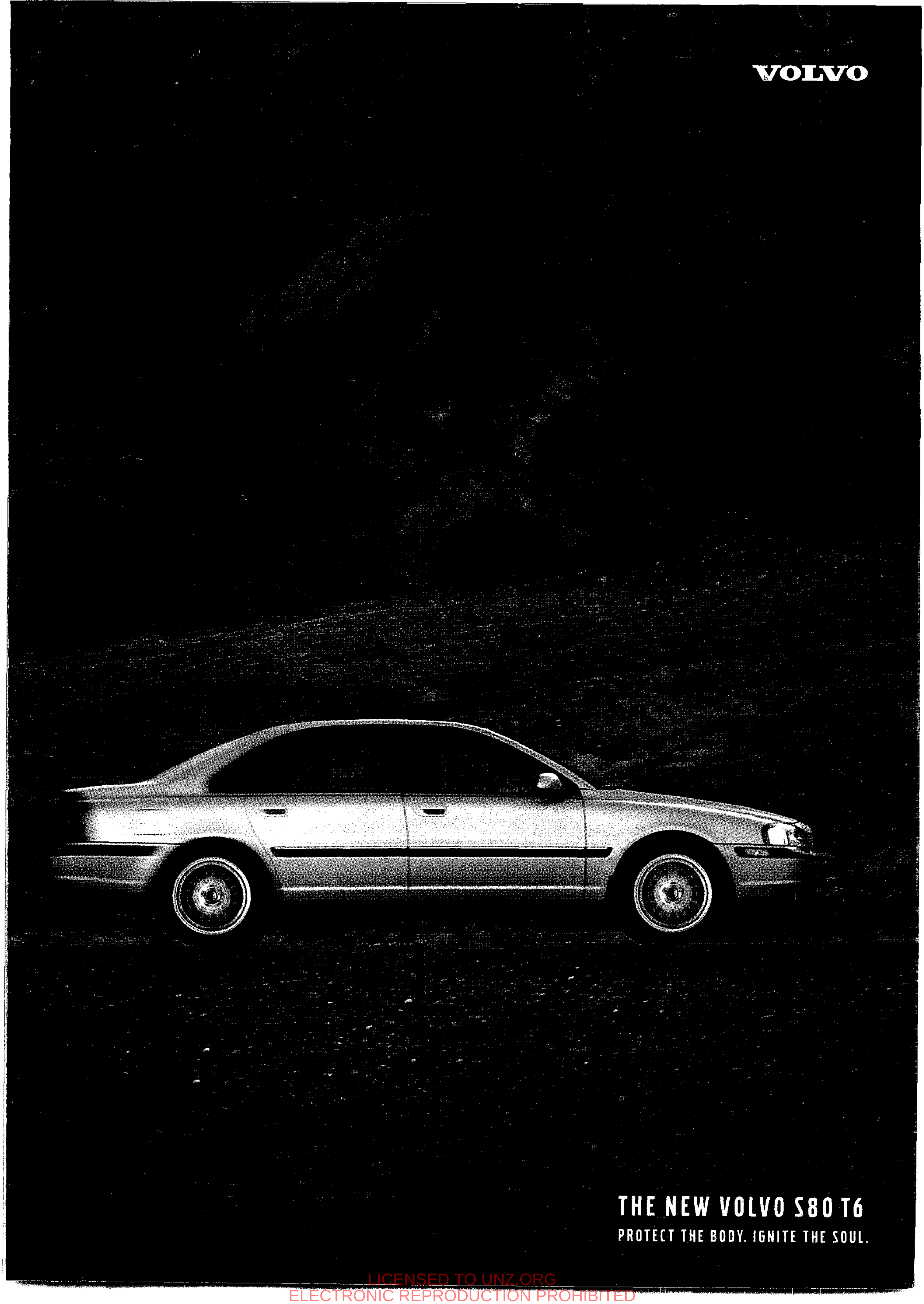
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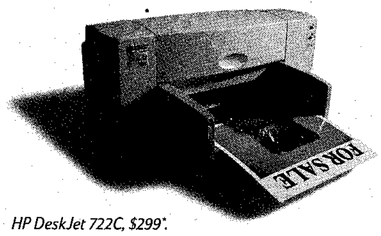

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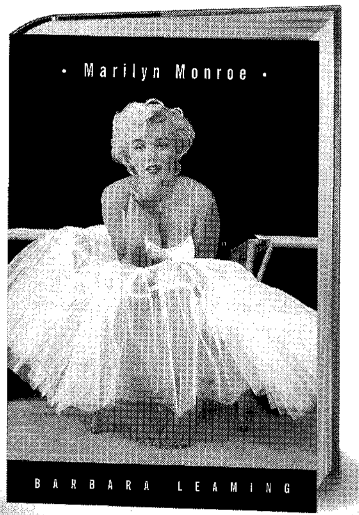

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—*Kirkus Reviews*

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JEAN STROUSE ("The Brilliant Bailout," p. 62) is the author of "Alice James," a biography, and has just completed a life of J. Pierpont Morgan.

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JOSEPH EPSTEIN (Books, p. 102) is an essayist whose new collection, "Narcissus Leaves the Pool," will be published this spring.

DAVID BROOKS (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 46), an editor at *The Weekly Standard*, is working on a book about the manners and morals of upscale America.

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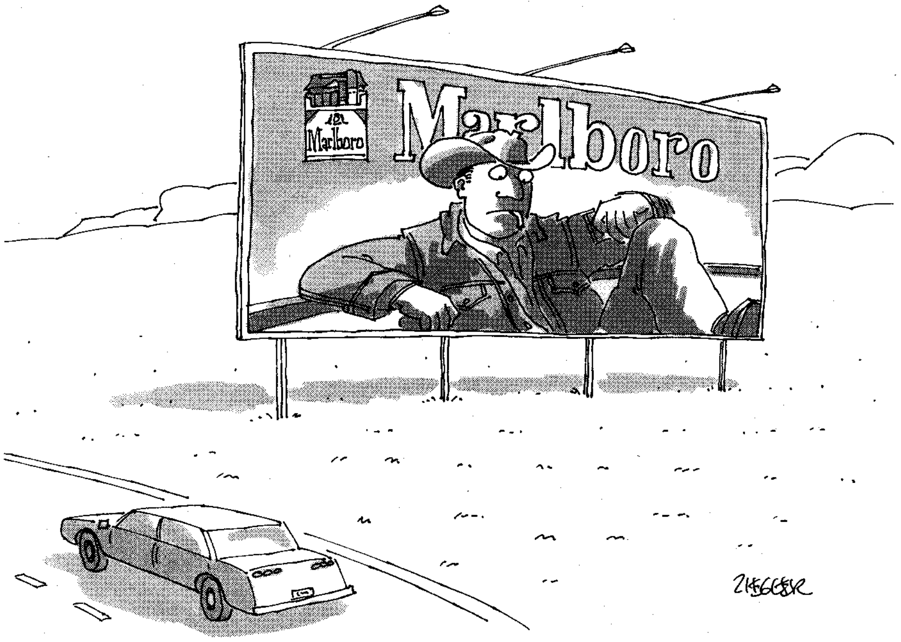
LOUISE GLÜCK (Poem, p. 75) won a 1993 Pulitzer Prize for her book of poems "The Wild Iris." Her book "Vita Nova" will be published in March. ♦



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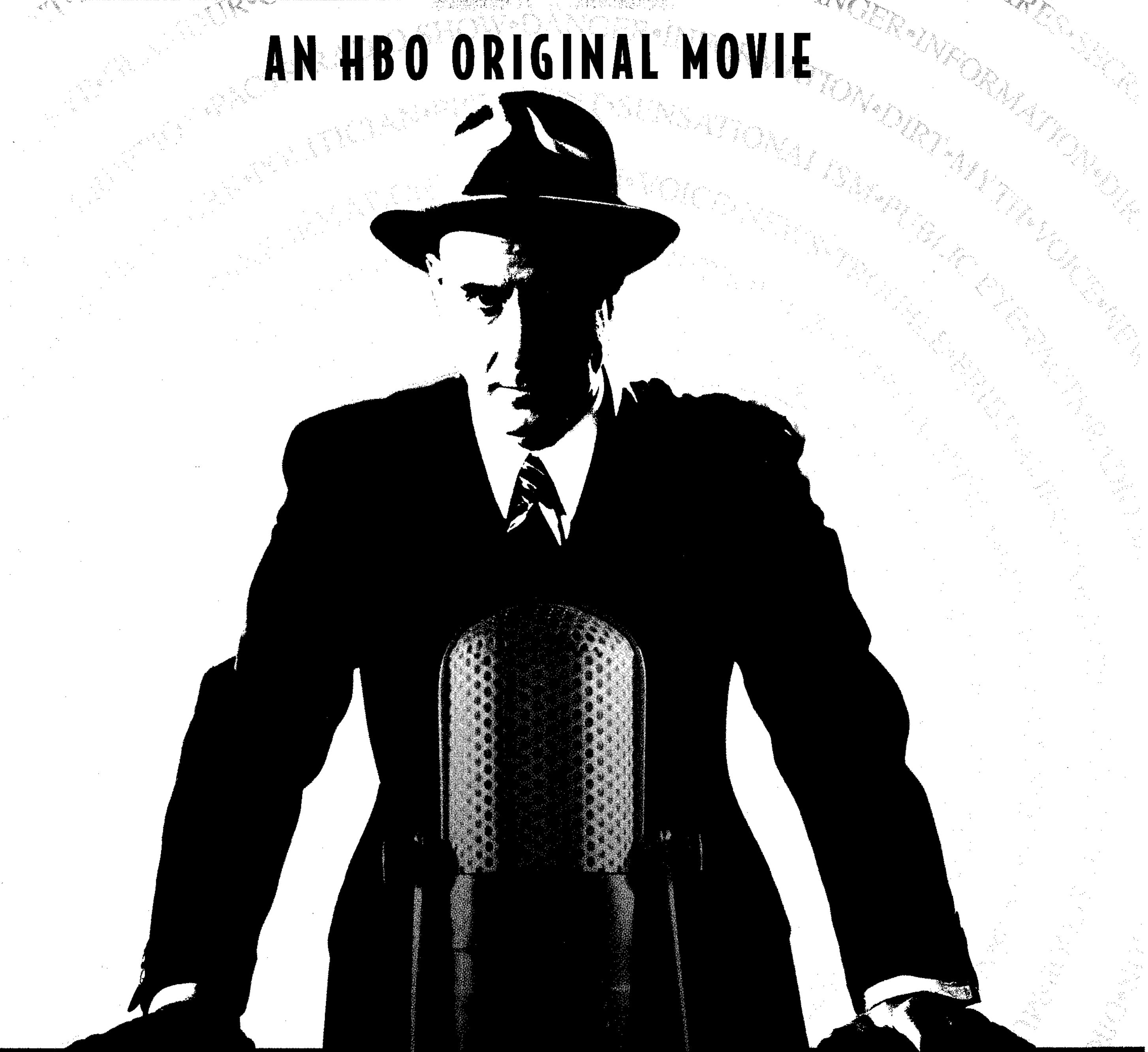

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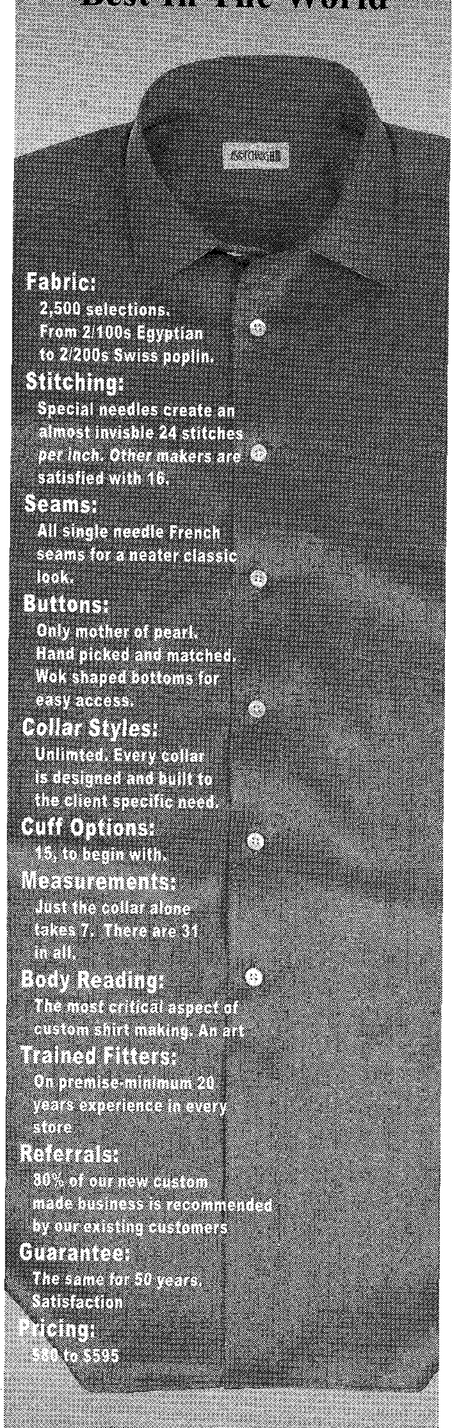

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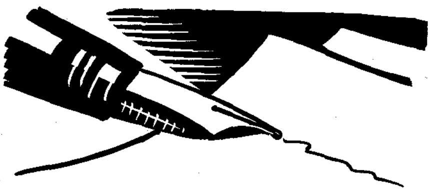

EVEN THEN, THE GREATEST

David Remnick's retrospective account of the Cassius Clay period of Muhammad Ali's life ("American Hunger," October 12th) brought to mind a time when I was one of the pubescent boys who, after school and on weekends, watched Clay train at the Fifth Street Gym in Miami Beach. Thirty-five or forty years later, the gym is gone, but I can still see Clay's feet dancing and his mouth going. Even a kid could sense that he was heading for greatness and would leave behind all the other hopefuls at the gym; he truly was a giant to us. What we couldn't appreciate at the time was how our first exposure to a black man who flashed brilliance in mind and body and was in charge of himself and his surroundings would inform our maturation. In that sense, we white boys were also in training in that gym, and Cassius Clay was our teacher.

RONALD P. JAYSON
Decatur, Ga.

BUCKLEY AT BERKELEY

William F. Buckley, Jr.,'s dyspeptic notes on the lecture circuit (Personal History, "The Circuit Rider," October 12th) reminded me of an evening in the mid-seventies when I played hostess to one of Buckley's forays. The University of California at Berkeley had invited him to give a lecture in a series about contemporary China, and I, the wife of a prominent China scholar, was dismayed to learn that none of the student or faculty organizers had had the courtesy to arrange the customary prespeech dinner for him. I decided to do it myself. It was not easy to produce, in Berkeley, a group of people who wanted to meet Buckley and wouldn't insult him to his face. I believe that I succeeded, though when I raised a glass at dinner and said, "You see, Mr. Buckley, we do have some conservatives in Berkeley," he looked around our table of ten, smiled his feral smile, and replied, "And this is all of them, isn't it?"

SHEILA K. JOHNSON
Cardiff, Calif.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

Though it is true, as Jonathan Franzen writes in "Imperial Bedroom" (October 12th), that the average American living in a small town in the eighteen-nineties may have been endlessly tracked, scrutinized, and analyzed by his family and his neighbors, it is also true that the average American would have had similar information about all of them, too. The result was the same kind of uneasy but workable balance of power that was practiced until recently by governments with weapons of mass destruction. People today do not fear scrutiny from their neighbors so much as invasions by vast organizations like credit bureaus and medical-database providers that swoop down to wreak their damage (often on the basis of one of the creative new misunderstandings made possible by computers) and then leave lives wrecked with no hope of rectification or revenge. You can't see them coming, you can't convince them they're wrong, and you can't fight back except in the courts. This is what people mean when they talk about the privacy problem, and it's a problem that should not be taken lightly.

ANDREW LINDEMANN MALONE
Silver Spring, Md.

STEAL THIS BOOK?

I appreciated Scott Stossel's mention of my book "How to Steal Food from the Supermarket" (Books, October 12th), but I was astonished to learn that it was being distributed at supermarket-security conventions. The modest sales of the book suggest that they're not distributing many of them or—egad!—they're shoplifting them.

JOHN ANDREW ANDERSON
Morgantown, W. Va.

•

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Chère Maître—A dramatic reading of correspondence between George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, presented by Irene Worth and Peter Eyre. Opens Nov. 21 at 7:30 and continues, Wednesdays through Sundays, through Dec. 20. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051.)

Electra—Zoë Wanamaker has the title role in a Donmar Warehouse/McCarter Theatre production of Sophocles' tragedy. Previews begin Nov. 19. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Fool Moon—Clowning and music with Bill Irwin, David Shiner, and the Red Clay Ramblers, who return to Broadway for a limited engagement of their 1993 show. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told—A fresh version of a very old tale, by Paul Rudnick. Joanna Adler, Lisa Kron, Amy Sedaris, and Alan Tudyk are in the cast. Directed by Christopher Ashley. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

On the Town—The New York Shakespeare Festival's revival of the 1944 Comden and Green classic makes its move to Broadway. George C. Wolfe is the director. In previews through Nov. 21. Opens Nov. 22 at 3. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Parade—The story of Leo Frank, a Northerner wrongly convicted of murdering a child in the South in 1913, is the basis of a musical by Alfred Uhry (book) and Jason Robert Brown (music and lyrics). Directed by Harold Prince. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Peter Pan—Former Olympic gymnast Kathy Rigby returns to the title role of the 1954 musical. Previews begin Nov. 20. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Snakebit—A drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, staged by Naked Angels. In previews through Nov. 21. Opens Nov. 22 at 8 and runs through Dec. 4. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 479-7304.)

Stop Kiss—Diana Son's romantic comedy takes place in the aftermath of a kiss between two women. Jo Bonney is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Waiting for Godot—Christopher Lloyd, Tony Shalhoub, and John Turturro take on Beckett's tragicomedy. Opens Nov. 18 at 7:30. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All Under Heaven—Valerie Harper portrays Pearl Buck in a drama about the author's life, co-written by Ms. Harper and Dyke Garrison. (Century Theatre, 111 W. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Americana Absurdum—Eight actors portray thirty characters in Brian Parks's lampoon of American culture. Nov. 18-21 at 8. Continues through Nov. 28. (Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St. 420-8877.)

August Snow and **Night Dance**—Repertory stagings of two plays—one set in 1937, the other in 1945—about a North Carolina family, by the novelist Reynolds Price. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231.)

Carry the Tiger to the Mountain—A drama inspired by the story of Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American who was murdered by unemployed auto workers in Detroit. Written by Cherylene Lee and presented by Pan Asian Rep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Dec. 5.)

Collected Stories—Despite a splendid performance by Uta Hagen, as an aging writer who tells her protégée (Lorca Simons) the one story about her own life which she hasn't written, this revival of Donald Margulies's 1997 drama only points out how poorly constructed the relationship between the two women is. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Communicating Doors—A wonderful farce with a fairy-tale ending, by Alan Ayckbourn. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

Corpus Christi—Terrence McNally's new play, which tells the story of a homosexual Christlike figure, travelled a rough road before its opening. (The production was cancelled briefly after religious groups protested and the Manhattan Theatre Club staff received death threats.) Now here it is, and a monumentally unrewarding piece of work it is, too. McNally has squandered the wealth of some very promising themes: in two (very long) hours, he manages to trivialize both sexual and religious persecution. While protesters outside the theatre despair of McNally's soul, audience members who have witnessed his plentiful gifts in the past may despair of his imagination. Slackly directed by Joe Mantello. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/26 & 11/2/98.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Nov. 29.)

De La Guarda—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

Duet! A Romantic Fable—The Adobe Theatre Company's amiable spoof of all things fifties, from lounge acts to monster movies to overwrought dream sequences. The cast is charming, and the direction is not overwhelming—a big step in the right direction for Adobe. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

Eight!—A one-man musical portrait of Henry VIII, written by and starring Steeve Arlen. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 279-4200.)

Footloose—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film, co-written by Dean Pitchford (who also wrote the screenplay) and Walter Bobbie. With music by Tom Snow and lyrics by Mr. Pitchford. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Getting and Spending—Broadway is too much with us; evening and afternoon, / Waiting for the ending, we lay waste two full hours: / Little we see on the Stage that is ours; / We have given sixty dollars away—for someone, a sordid boon! (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

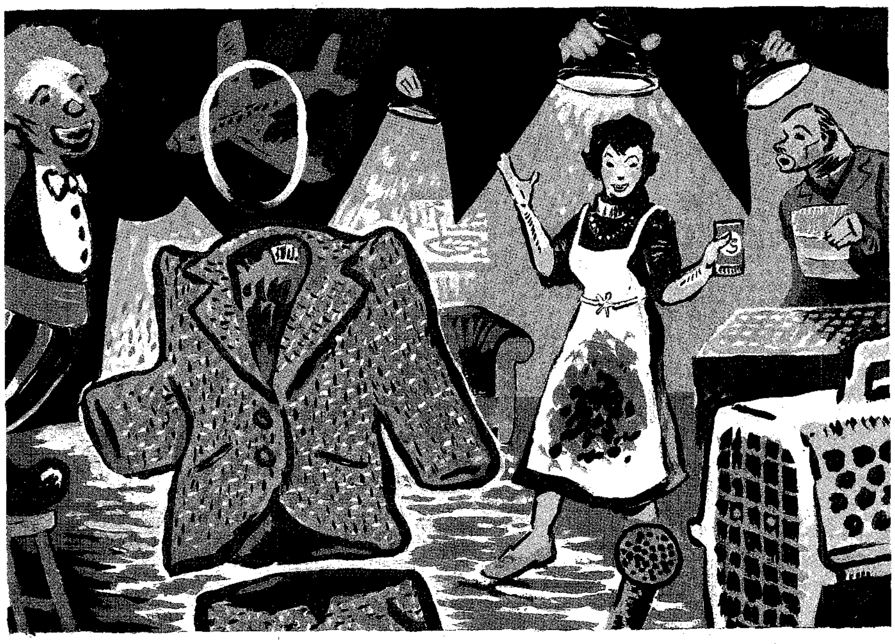
100 Years of Lorca—Three of the Spanish playwright's works, "The House of Bernarda Alba," "As Five Years Pass," and "The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife," performed in repertory. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—Sandra Bernhard arrives on Broadway with an updated version of her latest one-woman show. (11/16/98) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Impossible Marriage—Holly Hunter leads the cast of Beth Henley's new drama, set in Savannah, about a young woman's marriage to a philandering older man. Stephen Wadsworth is the director. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Killer Joe—In Tracy Letts's graphic dark comedy, an American family striving for a better life—in this case, a bunch of losers living in a trailer outside Dallas—hires a hit man to help things along. Though the experience sometimes feels like being trapped in Sam Shepard's claustrophobic Nowheresville while being smacked around by Quentin Tarantino, the terrific production is so vividly unself-conscious that you hardly feel assaulted at all—in fact, you enjoy it. Scott Glenn and Amanda Plummer are billed as the stars, but the whole cast is excellent. Wilson Milam is the director. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

The Knee Desires the Dirt—Women's Project and Productions begins a season of plays about "out-of-control moms" with this one by Julie Hebert. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 22.)



"Americana Absurdum," by Brian Parks, at Present Company Theatorium.

D. B. DOWD

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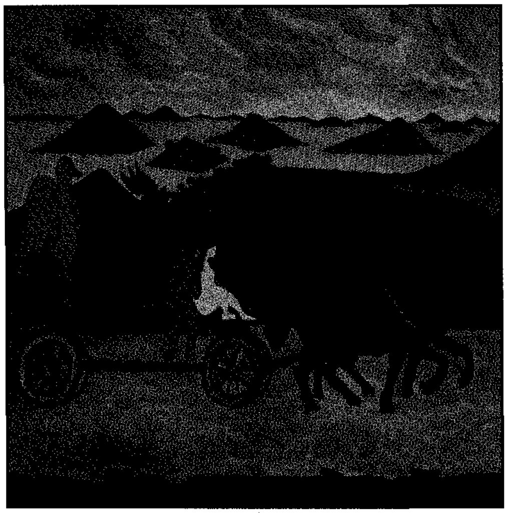

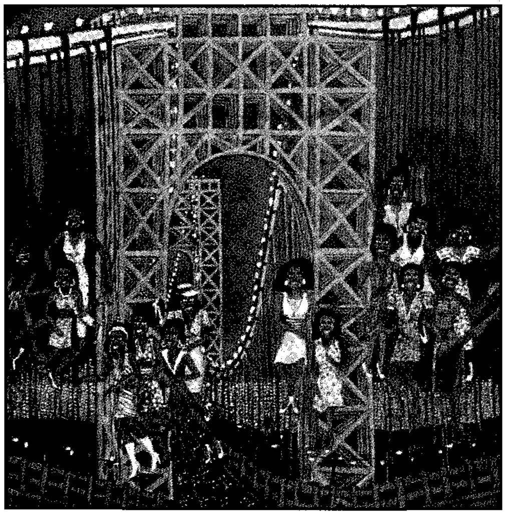

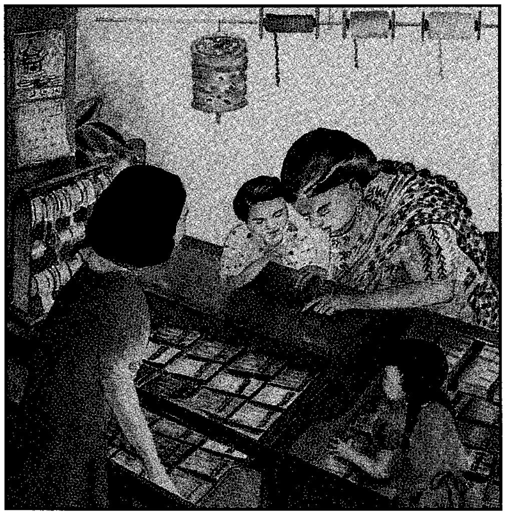

Bob Thompson, *An Allegory*, 1964
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Faith Ringgold, detail from *Dancing on the George Washington Bridge*, 1988
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October 1, 1998 – January 3, 1999

Reiko Sudo, *Stainless Steel Gloss*, 1990
STRUCTURE AND SURFACE: CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE TEXTILES
Photo by: Karin Willis
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
November 12, 1998 – January 26, 1999

Amelia Lau Carling, detail from *Mama & Papa Have a Store*
MI FAMILIA, MI COMUNIDAD
Photo by: D. James Dee
Museum of Chinese in the Americas
70 Mulberry Street
December 12, 1998 – February 27, 1999

On canvas,
on paper, and on fabric,
it's all on display
this fall.
And with support
from AT&T,
New York City
will have a brush
with greatness.

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Krapp's Last Tape—Beckett's 1958 one-act, presented by the Irish Repertory Theatre. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Nov. 29.)

Kuni-Leml—A musical about a nineteenth-century woman whose father promises her in marriage to a Hasidic scholar. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Little Me—Martin Short and Faith Prince star in a revival of the 1962 musical comedy by Neil Simon (book), Cy Coleman (music), and Carolyn Leigh (lyrics). Direction and choreography are by Rob Marshall. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

The Memory of Water—Or, "The Memory of Orton, Aykbourn, and Nichols." In the English playwright Shelagh Stephenson's play, three lonesome sisters assemble at their mother's funeral, where, as usual, the ghost has all the best lines. The expert Suzanne Bertish leads a good cast, but the work itself is too callow to properly mix the potent cocktail of high jinks and heartbreak. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Miser—A Pearl Theatre Company staging of Molière's comedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Dec. 6.)

The Mystery of Irma Vep—It's not difficult to imagine what made this farce a hit back in 1984: the play's author and original star, the immensely gifted Charles Ludlam, who died in 1987 of complications due to AIDS. As staged and performed by that production's co-star, Everett Quinton (whose big, mournful face is just made for the movies), this version ends up a bore, despite its fairly outré conceit—"Rebecca" meets Agatha Christie meets pure camp. The quick-change business of Quinton and the energetic Stephen DeRosa (they each play at least four parts) distracts you from the occasional lame joke, but not from the strained archness and the fact that there's nothing cutting-edge going on. Drag has been out of the closet for a long time now; this is a relic of a more innocent time. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

A Night in November—A one-man drama starring Dan Gordon and written by Marie Jones, which is set on the night of the 1994 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 4.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Old Settler—Leslie Uggams and Godfrey L. Simmons, Jr., portray a pair of mismatched lovers in 1943 Harlem. The play, written by John Henry Redwood, has fine characterizations and delightful jokes, but the structure is predictably melodramatic, and Mr. Redwood tosses in so many details about the neighborhood and the times that he occasionally leaves his actors stranded in a morass of facts. Nevertheless, the whole cast (which includes Lynda Gravátt and Rosalyn Coleman), under the strong direction of Harold Scott, overcomes it all. And the pairing of Ms. Uggams' deft radiance with Mr. Simmons' eager charm is a pleasure to see. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Nov. 29.)

Over the River and Through the Woods—In Joe DiPietro's new comedy, a young man planning his future clashes with his four Italian-American grandparents. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Pericles—The Public Theatre's staging of Shakespeare's tragicomedy. (425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Nov. 22.)

The Primary English Class—Gerald Gutierrez directs Israel Horovitz's 1976 play, which stars Didi Conn as a total-immersion English teacher. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Retribution—Dennis Christopher and Jack Laufer portray a pair of Auschwitz survivors, in a drama by Mark R. Shapiro. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan—A bigamist (Patrick Stewart) is exposed when his two wives (Frances Conroy and Meg Gibson) visit him in the hospital, in a drama by Arthur Miller. David Esbjornson is the director. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi plays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Shaughraun—The nineteenth-century playwright Dion Boucicault's melodrama, staged by the Irish Repertory Theatre. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Side Man—Warren Leight's nostalgic paean to mid-century jazz musicians. Michael Mayer is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Spalding Gray—The monologuist returns to P.S. 122 with his work in progress. Continues, Mondays only, through Dec. 21. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Stratford Festival at City Center—The Stratford Festival presents Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and Molière's "The Miser" in rotating repertory. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Nov. 29.)

Swan Lake—The British choreographer Matthew Bourne's thrilling, iconoclastic version of the Tchaikovsky ballet takes the story of the troubled Prince who falls in love with a swan out of the realm of the folkloric and into the realm of Freudian nightmare, where obsession substitutes for enchantment. The simple but profound exchange of male for female swans sweeps away in one stroke the hidebound froufrou of the traditional version and releases enormous energy into the music. (10/19/98) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. A peerless, delightful evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

This Is Our Youth—A dark comedy by Kenneth Lonergan. Mark Brokaw is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Trainspotting—Harry Gibson's 1994 adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel about a group of Edinburgh junkies. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

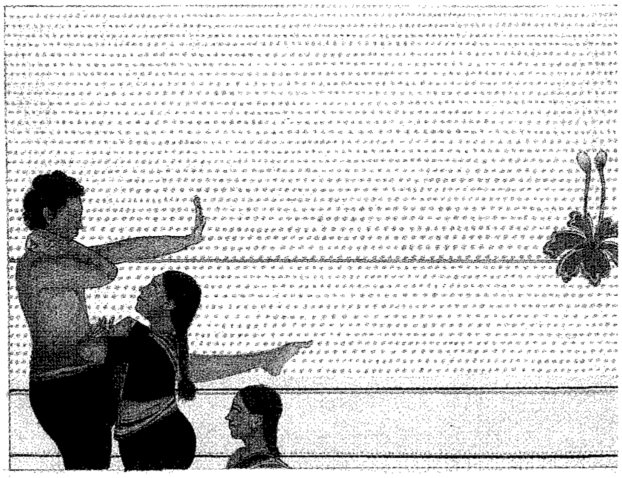
Wit—Margaret Edson's funny, diamond-sharp first play manages to yoke together Donne's "Holy Sonnets" and ovarian cancer to make an original drama about the dignity of the spirit and the failure of modern medicine. Kathleen Chalfant, as the feisty English professor with only two hours to live and so many acid jokes to tell, gives one helluva fine performance. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

Wolf Lullaby—A nine-year-old is accused of murdering another child, in a drama by Australian playwright Hilary Bell. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 22.)

Zora Neale Hurston—A drama about the black American novelist, folklorist, and playwright. Written by Laurence Holder. Elizabeth Van Dyke has the title role. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.... **THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.... **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.... **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.... **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.... **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.... **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.... **DINAH WAS:** Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.... **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.... **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.... **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.... **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.... **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.... **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.... **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.... **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.... **POWER PLAYS:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.... **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.... **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.... **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.... **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.... **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.... **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.... **THE SOUND OF MUSIC:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.... **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.... **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.... **VISITING MR. GREEN:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.



"Raga—In Search of Femininity," at BAM.

AMBREEN BUTT

DANCE

"Raga—In Search of Femininity"—The Madras-based choreographer Chandalekha uses a cast of three men and four women trained in both modern-dance and bharata natyam techniques in a work that promises to explore traits of femininity and erotic memory which men and women share. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Nov. 18 and Nov. 20-21 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 3.)

Garth Fagan Dance—The "Lion King" choreographer brings his own Rochester-based company to New York, with repertory offerings and the première of "Two Pieces of One: Green." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 17-21 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Ba'amyard"—Another "Lion King" standout, the percussionist Junior (Gabu) Wedderburn, takes advantage of his days off, in a dance-and-music collaboration that sets such African dance traditions as Nyabinghi and Kumina in a Jamaican atmosphere of informal

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I used to trap the wind in bags
and sell them to sailors.

In a past life I was pure, glacial spring water.

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The Colombian rock-and-roll band Bloque, at the Knitting Factory.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

performance. Wedderburn's Ancient Vibrations percussion ensemble shares the stage with nine dancers, including Jamaicans Tre'Jah Ethiopia and Patsy Ricketts, whom Gabu has dubbed the "movement Gorgon." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 23 at 9:30 and Nov. 24 at 8:30.)

Dance Theatre Workshop—Sharon Hayes and Erica Stuart bring separate solo performances to a shared engagement. In "The Lesbian," Hayes presents her findings from a yearlong cross-country trip observing "lesbians in their natural habitat." (Nov. 21 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 3.) In "A Girl Joan," Stuart portrays Joan of Arc and the many voices in Joan's head. (Nov. 19-20 at 8.) (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

"Endangered Species"—The hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris and his Philly-based company Pure Movement perform their blend of street-dance moves (pop, step, lock, electric boogaloo) in such works as "March of the Antmen" and "P-Funk," an evocation of murdered dancers who are "funked-ified" by their colleagues onstage. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 19 and Nov. 22 at 8:30 and Nov. 20-21 at 8:30 and 11. Through Nov. 29.)

"Dance and Spiritual Life"—Three African-American choreographers, Bebe Miller, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Dianne McIntyre, share an evening of works on spiritual themes. Miller offers "Blessed," Zollar presents "Transitions," and McIntyre brings "Last Poems to God." "I didn't want to camouflage the fact that the work is about God," McIntyre says, "so I put it in the title." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 21 at 8.)

"Mer-Miroir"—The French choreographer Michel Hallet Eghayan presents a trilogy of works on the commonality of Mediterranean peoples, set to a score sung by Lebanese singer Soumaya Baalbacki. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Nov. 20-21 at 8.)

Dances by Ginger Thatcher—Matthew Bourne's assistant choreographer for "Swan Lake" assembles an ad-hoc company of nineteen dancers to perform in the American début of her works, including "Appalachia Waltz" and "Love Fools." (Rose Penthouse, Lincoln Center. For reservations, call 718-875-7745. Nov. 16-17 at 8.)

Izumi Tanaka Dance Company—The six-member troupe performs the seven-part "Moonlight." The choreographer follows with her solo work "The Wistful Tree." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 19-22 at 8:30.)

"Il Barone Rampante"—A quartet of dancers presents Valerie Striar's adaptation of the Italo Calvino story "The Baron in the Trees," in which a boy baron decides to live out his days up in the leafy boughs. (La MaMa, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Nov. 19-22 at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Robert Fripp—The King Crimson leader and thinking man's guitar guru, playing twenty-first-century tape loops. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. No tickets necessary. Nov. 18-19 at 12:15 and 7.)

New York Autumn Blues Festival—Nov. 20 at 8: Guitarist Clarence (Gatemouth) Brown lays it down. . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 8: An evening of acoustic blues closes the festival with vocalist and guitarist John Cephas and harmonica player Phil Wiggins. Guitarist John Jackson is also on the bill. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Chris Isaak—That languorous voice, that chiselled chin: Isaak intoxicates an audience better than laughing gas. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Brian Setzer Orchestra—The year's most unexpected success story. Setzer confounded the cynics by sticking to what was once considered a necrological obsession with swing music. Then the movie "Swingers" and the Gap commercial weighed in, and the former Stray Cat was sitting pretty, as the sales of his latest album, "The Dirty Boogie," attest. But Setzer isn't just dressing up: his big band plays it so straight you'd think the latter half of the twentieth century never happened. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Mary Chapin Carpenter—Country music's most literate songwriter (and sometime author) offers her elegant observations on matters of the heart. With the winsome folksinger Catie Curtis. (Hammerstein Ballroom. Nov. 21 at 8.)

Kiss—On its umpteenth album, the irresistible "Psycho Circus," the favorite sons of Flushing, Queens, are back in full-makeup froth. The band, now flaunting its own credit card (among other franchise-related merchandise), has become such a professional organization that their concerts run like an Atlantic City casino: garish, expensive, noisy, and carpeted in cheese. Plus lots of things blow up. See it now, or wait and take your kids to see it at the Smithsonian. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Nov. 22 at 8. . . . ¶ Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Nov. 23 at 8.)

Marilyn Manson—The year's most unexpected failure (with honorable mention to Courtney Love). The man who would be Satan has failed to raise America's eyebrows (even with his new prosthetic breasts, Manson is no competition for Ken Starr), and his new disk, "Mechanical Animals," is languishing on the charts. Perhaps this is because Manson's new sound, more ornate seventies glam than nineties head-crunching industrial, requires a bit too much range for his limited talents. (Hammerstein Ballroom. Nov. 23 at 8.)

Metallica—The hirsute desperadoes of alienation turned glamorous MTV poseurs return, playing selections from their latest album, "Reload" a high point in a fifteen-year career that's taken them from basements to ballparks. (Roseland. Nov. 24 at 7:30.)

A Tribe Called Quest—The world's most delightfully effervescent rap group (De La Soul is missing in action) plays music from its excellent, aptly named new album, "The Love Movement." (Hammerstein Ballroom. Nov. 24 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 21: A night of Canadian-Celtic tunes, with the Newfoundland outfit **GREAT BIG SEA**—four guys and their mandolin, accordion, and bodhran (a goatskin drum)—and their neighbor, the Nova Scotian singer **MARY JANE LAMOND.**

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Nov. 23: Former Crowded House front man **NEIL FINN,** in an all-acoustic performance. With **DAVE DOBBYN.** Nov. 24: Former "Rent" star **IDINA MENZEL** and singer-songwriter **FRANCIS DUNNERY.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 21: Tutored in the harmonica as a teen-ager by the legendary Sonny Boy Williamson II, **JAMES COTTON** made his first recording for Sam Phillips's Sun Records in 1953 (as a member of Howlin' Wolf's band) and spent more than a decade as Muddy Waters's harp player during the golden age of Chicago blues. After all these years, he still has his chops.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 18: **DENNIS BROWN,** the man they call the Crown Prince of Reggae (Marley, of course, was King), and dancehall veteran **SUGAR MINOTT.** Nov. 19: **MEN AT WORK.** Who can it be now, indeed? This clever Australian combo, whose intramural banter once earned them comparisons with the Beatles, return wiser, if not richer. Nov. 20-21: **THE SAW DOCTORS.** It's a long road from County Galway to the East Village, so you'll have to forgive the boys in this hard-drinking and hard-rocking band for being a bit thirsty. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The leaders of the eight-piece Colombian rock band **BLOQUE** (Nov. 18), who used to back one of that country's top pop stars, Carlos Vives, know a thing or two about turning indigenous music into commercial material. But they're not easily satisfied; their tunes incorporate hard grooves, a touch of jazz, and the heavy dissonance and discontented lyrics of old-fashioned rock and roll. With **BIG ASS TRUCK.** Nov. 22: A program of vintage and Super-8 erotic films, with live scores by **GOD IS MY CO-PILOT, KIKI AND HERB,** and others. **MISSTRESS FORMIKA** is the host.

Life, 158 Bleecker St. (420-1999)—Nov. 22: Bone-crushing, sweat-dripping speed punk with **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES.** The eighties are back.

Shine, 285 West Broadway, at Canal St. (941-0900)—Nov. 19-20: Eighties synth-pop hero and vegetarian **HOWARD JONES.**

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Nov. 20: **JUNIOR BROWN,** an Indiana cowboy who is perhaps the only guitarist who can switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar. Nov. 21: **URBAN BLIGHT.** Nov. 22: Cajun dance tunes with **ROY CARRIER AND THE NITE ROCKERS.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Nov. 19-20: The long-lost, triple-guitar grandiosity of **MOBY GRAPE.**

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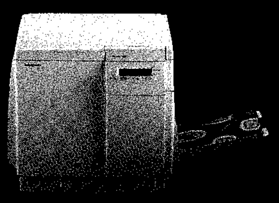


JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Nov. 19-21: The **CLAUDIO RODITI** quintet. Flugelhornist Roditi and tenorist **DAVID SANCHEZ** have more than Latin blood to bind them; both are passionate improvisers who regularly mine the rhythmic impulses of bop-related material with aggressive eloquence. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Having recorded and toured with (not to mention having married) Ella Fitzgerald, the premier jazz bassist **RAY BROWN** (here through Nov. 22) can be considered an expert of sorts on the great singer. Vocalist **DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER,** Brown's special guest, has done her share of studying Fitzgerald's work; together, she and Brown will revive enough of the spirit of the irreplaceable icon to remind us how much we still miss her. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through the New Year, the inimitable **BOBBY SHORT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 22: The **GEORGE COLEMAN** quartet. Saxophonist Coleman is a marvel. There isn't a player who knows his instrument better, nor one who feels as compelled to hit a musical home run with each expansive solo. Coleman's drive and vigor are matched by his longtime partners, pianist **HAROLD MABERN** and bassist **JAMIL NASSER,** and the addition of **JOE FARNSWORTH** on drums will turn this into a steaming affair. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Nov. 22: In **STEFON HARRIS,** the jazz renaissance has its first young-pup vibraphonist. Included in this promising, if garrulous, stylist's sextet is the trombonist **STEVE TURRE.**

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 18-21: Tapping into the wellspring of Tyner, Hancock, and Evans, pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** has fashioned her own engaging and personal sound. Everything she touches, from American songbook standards and Brazilian lilts to her own modernist pieces, rings with assuredness. Like an old married couple, Brackeen and her longtime colleague, the revered bassist **CECIL MC BEE,** seem to complete each other's musical sentences.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 23: The **HAMIET BLUIETT TELEPATHIC ORCHESTRA.** Shunning the conventional range of his cumbersome instrument, Bluiett can coax unnatural and beautiful sounds from the baritone saxophone. Whether growling like a bullfrog or improvising in ambulance-siren tones, Bluiett engages in explorations that are grounded in the bedrock of blues and gospel music. The Telepathic Orchestra will be stocked with many of Bluiett's more intuitively gifted compatriots.

LENOX LOUNGE, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—**BOBBY WATSON** (here with his quartet on Nov. 20-21) is the Cannonball Adderley of our day: an exemplary alto player and a canny bandleader who revels in the pleasures of connecting with the crowd.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Dec. 5: The statuesque chanteuse **KAREN AKERS** presides over this plush Art Deco shrine, which is scheduled to permanently close on Dec. 19.

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Nov. 19-20: Though she's primarily a jazz vocalist, **ANGELA BOFILL** was brought up on Latin rhythms (by her Cuban father) and Motown soul (by her Puerto Rican mother). Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Nov. 22: The **LOUIS HAYES** quintet. Hayes doesn't get the press that his peers routinely garner, but he remains one of the greatest hard-bop drummers. With experience as the rhythmic muscle for Cannonball Adderley and Oscar Peterson, he knows how to keep a band solid and swinging. Dining.

TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Saxophonist **CHARLES GAYLE** (Nov. 21) defends his neo-expressionist turf, eschewing chord changes and polite tonalities for raw and focussed emotion. Brave music for brave listeners.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—After years of self-conscious recordings obsessed with musical history and stiff, obtuse playing, pianist **MARCUS ROBERTS** (here through Nov. 22) has begun to find his groove. In his trio he banishes his stylistic mannerisms and instead spins fresh ideas through in-the-moment interpretation. Stepping out of his role as the self-appointed guardian of tradition, Roberts actually uncovers his own voice. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Nov. 17-18: The **MARK WHITFIELD** trio. A young guitarist with chops to spare, Whitfield has the funky fluidity of the pre-pop George Benson, bolstered by a deep vein of gospel and blues. Saturdays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Nov. 18-21: Cornettist **WARREN VACHÉ** and guitarist **JOE PUMA** must channel Bix Beiderbecke and Eddie Lang when they play together, so simpatico is their feel for the lyrical pleasures of classic jazz. Bassist **GREG COHEN** rounds out the trio. Dining.

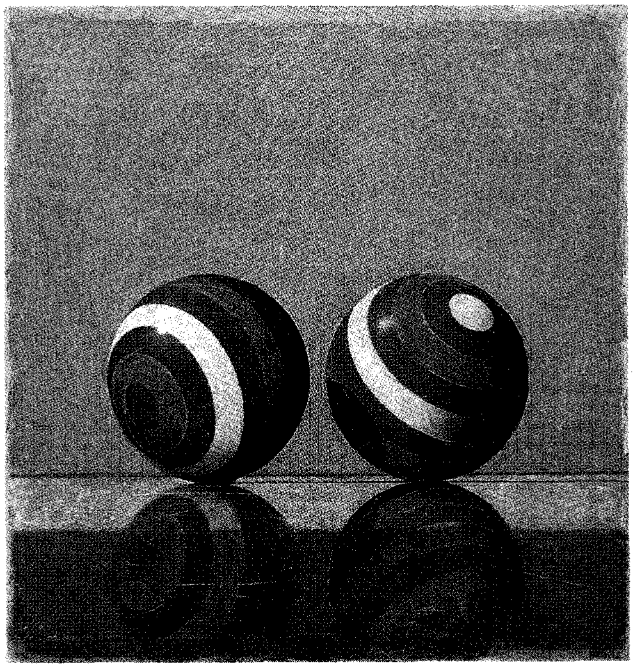
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Edgar Degas, Photographer." The influence of photography on Impressionist painting has long been established; here Degas seems to be returning the favor, exploiting avant-gardist, painterly effects in the mechanical medium. The most compelling pictures document the intimate Degas circle—Renoir, Mallarmé, et al. Indeed, a symbolist aesthetic seems to pervade many of the best photographs, as shadowy figures emerge from the half-darkness, or distorted reflections are caught in mirrors. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "Donato Creti: Melancholy and Perfection," seventeen paintings by the Bolognese classicist. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ "Charles Burchfield from the Collection." Through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ "Félix Vallotton: Woodcuts and Three Paintings." Through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ "Mary Cassatt: Drawings and Prints in the Met." Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum." Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Jackson Pollock," a comprehensive retrospective—the first in the United States since 1967—of the artist many regard as the most influential American painter of this century. It would be hard to fault the installation or the choice of works: in addition to many smaller drawings and canvases, the Modern has secured all of the major large pictures, from the mural that Peggy Guggenheim commissioned for her foyer in 1943 to the late "Blue Poles" (1952). This show should lay to rest one misconception: that Pollock's volatile life and violent end in a car crash on Long Island exert a more powerful pull than the works themselves. While these events certainly contribute to the artist's mythos, the pictures speak unequivocally of a revolution in form whose influence can still be felt half a century later. Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ For his stint in MOMA's Project series, the conceptual artist Maurizio Cattelan has hired an actor to walk around the museum during the afternoon, through Dec. 4, in a giant Picasso head and suit (depicting the artist in his lovable bald, sandaled, French-sailor-sweater stage), greeting museumgoers. Press materials have suggested influences from Fellini to commedia dell'arte, but visitors will be more struck by the actor's resemblance to Mickey Mouse. . . . ¶ "Focus: Pollock and Printmaking." Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ "Dubuffet to de Kooning: Expressionist Prints from Europe and America." Through Feb. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Rendezvous: Masterpieces from the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museums." By combining works from its permanent collection with works from the Pompidou Center in Paris (closed for renovations until Dec. 31, 1999), the Guggenheim has suddenly become an uptown sister to MOMA. Wright's first few ramps now tell the familiar story of modernism, from the Fauves to the Surrealists, but with a fresh sequence of images, many of them dazzling. Higher up, the synergy between the two collections turns to rivalry, as American painting, nonexistent down below, outshines a ragtag collection of Europeans. In the exhibition's final room, Arte Povera and Process Art meet in a slightly forced spirit of rapprochement. Through Jan. 24. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)



"The Fourth of July," by John Gibson (Hoff Fine Arts).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"Premises," a spectacular disaster in which two mediocre exhibitions (one of postwar French architecture, the other of postwar French installation and performance art) collide, to the benefit of neither. Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Mark Rothko retrospective continues through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ The first full-scale retrospective of the work of Bob Thompson. Through Jan. 3. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou" presents an astonishing array of objects—dolls, flags, rattles, pots, calabashes, medicine packets, paintings—more than five hundred in all, which bring to life the vivid history and practice of the Afro-Caribbean religion. Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch" offers some hundred large-scale court and religious paintings, manuscripts, and enamels done in the representational style that flourished under the dynasty that ruled Iran from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Through Jan. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 6; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Common Man, Mythic Vision: The Paintings of Ben Shahn" celebrates the artist's centennial by focussing on his output during and after the Second World War, when he turned from social realism to allegory. Though they're far from his best work, these later paintings connect interestingly with those of Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock, who shared Shahn's dour humanism. Around 1948, all three transformed and simplified their imagery. Shahn stopped working from photographs and began painting existentialist sermons like "Man" and "The Age of Anxiety." But the vision thing didn't come naturally to Shahn, and his hollow-eyed Everymen, generally squashed under a celestial fist, register as dreary rather than troubling. The one roomful of paintings from the thirties, full of prickly specificity and humor, draws one back like a magnet. Through March 7. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

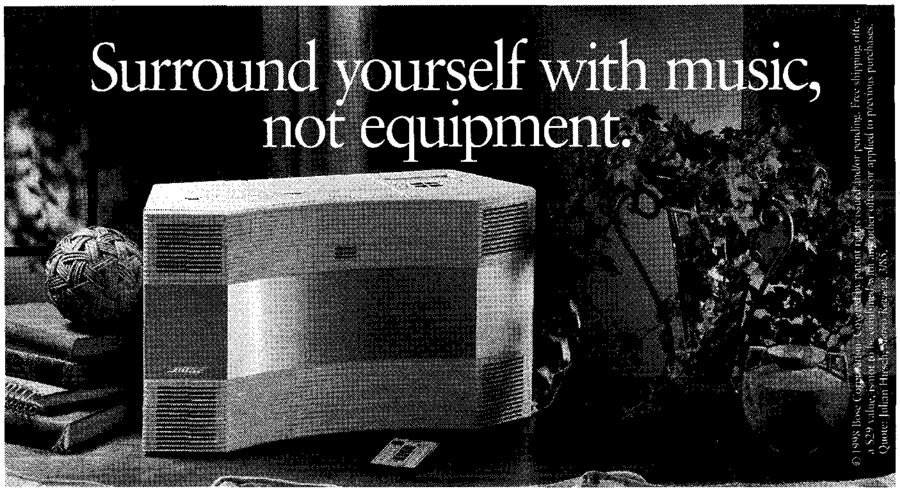
(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Fernando Botero—Thirty-some canvases depicting life in an imaginary South American town. Prosperous couples stroll with dogs and parasols; toddlers fuss in their nannies' arms; nude women primp and nap. Like Léger or Jean de Brunhoff (the creator of Babar), Botero loves to pump up the volume, stylizing his characters into deliciously corpulent sumo citizens. But Botero's motives are demonstrably affectionate, and his fantasy of an orderly bourgeois life glows with a sweetly improbable dignity. Through Dec. 5. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.)

Willem de Kooning (1904-97)—A sidewalk-sale assortment of smaller paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the artist's estate. This mix of treasures and castoffs, which is divided between two galleries (see also Chelsea—Short List), includes the original plaster version of "Clamdigger," de Kooning's most famous sculpture. There are also numerous rapturously agile drawings of women, several of which seem to represent Betty Boop in bed, looking postcoitally frazzled and happy. She might be the artist's muse after a long day in the studio. Through Dec. 19. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400. . . . For still another de Kooning show, see Galleries—Downtown.)

John Gibson—Brightly lit paintings of colored croquet balls inscribed with spirals and circles. There is a dizzying play on the surfaces—of reflection, shadow, and underpainting—which contrasts with the vastness of Gibson's perspective, turning these neglected objects into operatic monuments. Through Nov. 28. (Hoff Fine Arts, 52 E. 76th St. 249-5557.)

Short List—**ross bleckner,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through Dec. 19. . . . **charles burchfield,** Kennedy, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 541-9600. Through Dec.



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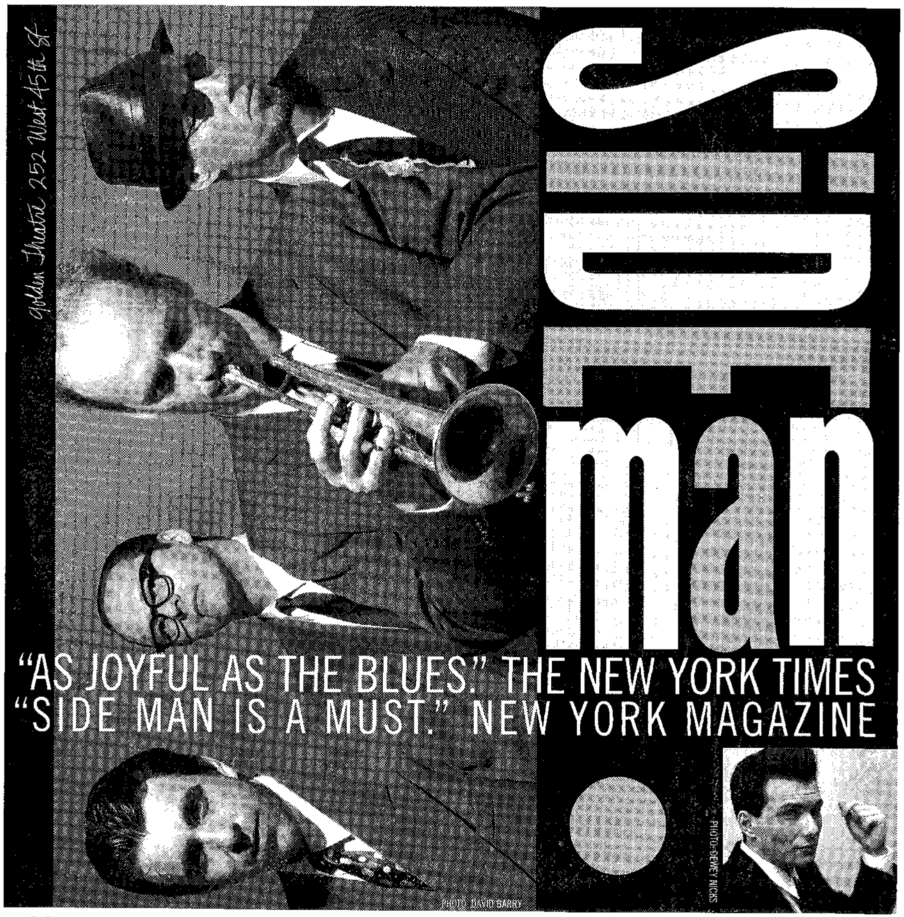
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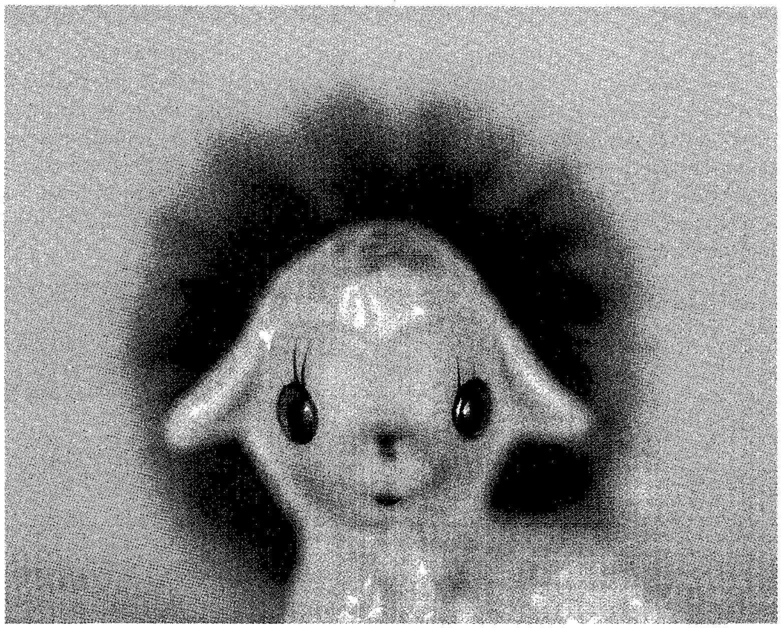
31. . . . **DEWITT GODFREY,** The Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. 879-3500. Through Dec. 24. . . . **RAYMOND HAN,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through Nov. 28. . . . **ANTON HEYBOER,** Baron/Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. 581-9191. Through Dec. 19. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Nov. 28. . . . **ROY LICHTENSTEIN,** Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331. Through Nov. 28. . . . **HENRI MATISSE,** C & M, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020. Through Dec. 12. . . . **JOHN MOORE,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Dec. 31. . . . **SIGMAR POLKE,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Through Jan. 16. . . . **JACKSON POLLOCK,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through Dec. 19. . . . **STONE ROBERTS,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Through Nov. 28. . . . **ED RUSCHA,** Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 472-8787. Through Dec. 5. . . . **BOB THOMPSON,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Through Jan. 9. . . . **IDELLE WEBER,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Nov. 28.


"Pretty Little Lamb," by Larry Gianettino, at Ricco/Maresca (see Photography).

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Carl Andre—New sculptures, in copper, lead, poplar, and sandstone, by this minimalist. All are floor-based and explore variations on the modular unit. "Perihelion" (1998) constructs concentric circles out of identical poplar planks. Trios of Andre's famous flat copper squares touch at the corners, forming triangular voids. The exhibition also includes "Hand Trials" (1972), a suite of the artist's poetry on such historical subjects as King Philip's War and the conquest of Mexico. Through Nov. 28. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105.)

Eugenio Dittborn—"Taciturna (recent and non-recent air-mail paintings)." Since 1984, this Chilean artist has been making paintings on large sheets of paper or cotton duck, which he then folds and sends through the international mail; it was originally a way to avoid Pinochet-era censorship (crime and execution are recurrent motifs). His use of silk-screening inevitably calls to mind the work of Polke and Rauschenberg, but the packaging, and Dittborn's handwritten comments, form as much a part of the work as the contents. Through Dec. 5. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

Tony Oursler—Video installations inspired by the *vanitas* genre. Oursler has created a series of large fibreglass skulls, on which he projects video images and texts, and has included the mumbled and often indecipherable audio complement that is typical in his work. Given that this show opened on Halloween, perhaps the artist intended a house-of-horrors theme. Through Nov. 28. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Monique Prieto—Medium- and large-scale abstract paintings by a leading figure among the new group of color-field painters from Los Angeles who have recently attracted so much attention. The foundations of Prieto's paintings are sketches she renders on the computer—a very new-technology way of updating the most traditional Western pictorial medium. The artist's slack blobs of color rest uneasily one above the other on unprimed canvas; her color combinations and compositions avoid conventional elegance (very much an issue with the color-fielders of yore), but they're pleasing anyway. Through Dec. 23. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366.)

James Rosenquist—Studies and paintings that relate to "The Swimmer in the Econo-mist," a trio of gigantic murals that was exhibited in Berlin this past spring. The over-all look suggests a cyclone in a supermarket aisle. Detergent- and cereal-box graphics (including words like "SAVE!" and "SAFE!") have been swept up into swirling, pleasantly kaleidoscopic patterns. There's a formula here—call it Osterized Pop—but the results can be smoothly intoxicating. Through Nov. 28. (Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500.)

George Stoll—Small-scale burned and painted balsa-and-alkyd sculptures, which look like ordinary sponges, arrayed in single-panel, diptych, and triptych formats. Regardless of their small-is-beautiful scale, they obviously mimic the forms of Brice Marden's monochrome paintings of the seventies, but with intense, acidic colors. Through Nov. 28. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

James Turrell—Four meticulously crafted installations by a leading Light and Space artist. The Magnatron series features hearth-like wall apertures that emit a strange flickering glow (in fact, it's the reflection of hidden television sets). The most impressive piece is "Cross-Cut," a pitch-black room that opens onto a tilting radiant scrim of red and blue. Turrell's luminous austerity recalls Rothko's, but without the melancholy; instead, these pieces project a sobering (even tranquillizing), Quaker-like calm. Through Dec. 23. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Short List—**NAYLAND BLAKE,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through Nov. 28. . . . **WILLEM DE KOONING,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Dec. 19. . . . **ARTURO ELIZONDO,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Dec. 10. . . . **JOANNE GREENBAUM,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through Dec. 23. . . . **LUCY GUNNING,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Nov. 28. . . . **REINHARD MUCHA,** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through Jan. 9. . . . **MARNIE WEBER,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through Nov. 21. . . . **SUE WILLIAMS,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through Nov. 21.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Willem de Kooning (1904-97)—Four groups of drawings from various stages of the artist's career, including a delightful suite from 1958 that transforms a laundered shirt into a whipsawing calligraphic abstraction. Through Dec. 19. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166.)

Matthew Ritchie—Absurdly complicated, brightly colored abstractions that illustrate this young British-born artist's sci-fi cosmology. Several of the paintings here allegedly represent the primal explosion of a character called Bubba, or Beelzebub, at the beginning of the world. What's appealing isn't so much the specifics of the Dungeons-and-Dragons symbolism as it is one's sense that Ritchie is passionately wrapped up in a vast, nutty enterprise. He set out some years ago to create an imaginative universe, and now he lives there. Through Nov. 28. (Basilico, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831.)

Linda St. John—The artist evokes a world of Rust Belt family life—poverty, alcoholism, and blighted love—with deceptively childish means: she uses Cray-Pas crayons and seam rippers to outline Teddy-bearish figures on a bender. "Three Ralphs on a Couch," her suite of drawings devoted to three generations of St. John men, displays a powerful mixture of satire and intimacy, as well as plenty of cardboard-cutout Falstaff beer bottles. Through Nov. 29. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open Sundays.)

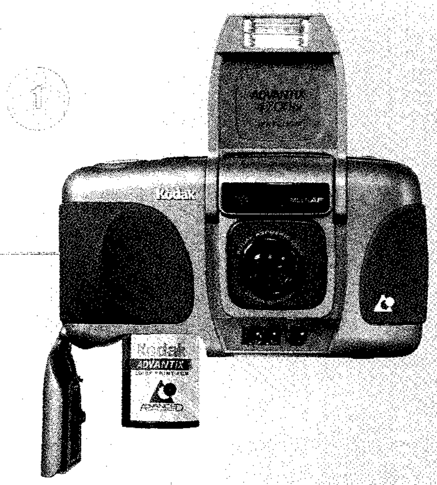
Kara Walker—Lewdly charming "race pictures" from a twenty-eight-year-old artist. Here, she broadens her range of materials, with paintings, found objects, and a wall text. The strongest works, however, remain her folkloric images of the antebellum South done in nineteenth-century-style silhouettes, which have a mischievous graphic elegance: imagine a cross between Aubrey Beardsley and Richard Pryor. Through Nov. 28. (Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. 941-6210.)

Short List—**FRANCIS BACON,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through Jan. 16. . . . **DAVID BLACK,** DFN, 560 Broadway. 334-3400. Through Dec. 5. . . . **ROSS BLECKNER,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Dec. 19. . . . **FORD CRULL,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. 925-3007. Through Dec. 5. . . . **KIM DINGLE,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Dec. 19. . . . **KIM MAC CONNEL,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through Dec. 23. . . . **OLIVER MARSDEN,** Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455. Through Dec. 12. . . . **MIA WESTERLUND ROOSEN,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Jan. 9.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Nov. 18-19: Sales of Impressionist and nineteenth-century art, including two major Monet paintings and a superb Vuillard. . . . ¶ Nov. 19: Auctions of twentieth-century art: works on paper (at 2, highlighted by a single-owner collection of Picasso drawings and a group of his ceramics) and paintings and sculptures (at 7, including major pieces by van Gogh and Magritte). . . . ¶ Nov. 20: More twentieth-century art. . . . ¶ Nov. 24: Eighty-one museum-quality pieces of French and English furniture from the French & Company dealership. . . . ¶ Nov. 24-25: Latin-American art, mostly from the twentieth century, including important works by Kahlo, Lam, and Tamayo. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

Sotheby's—Nov. 18: Contemporary art. . . . ¶ Nov. 20-21: Fine and collectible wines. . . . ¶ Nov. 22: African and Oceanic art. . . . ¶ Nov. 23: Pre-Columbian art. . . . ¶ Nov. 23-24: Latin-American art. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)



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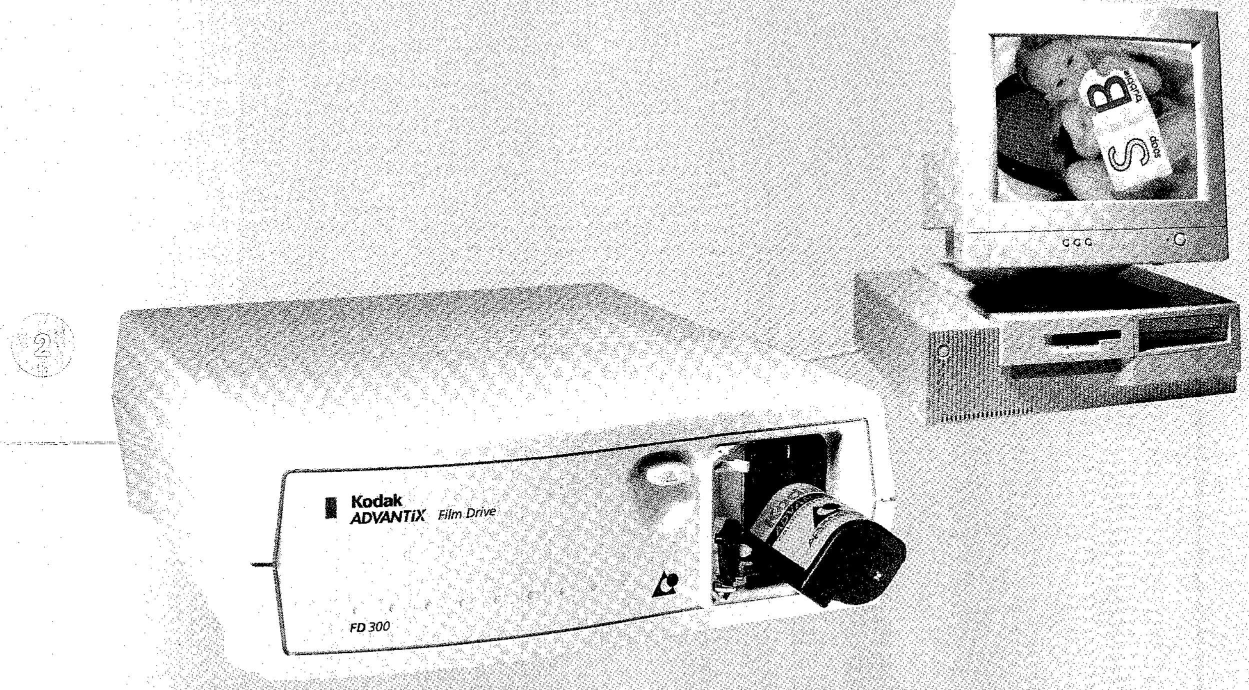

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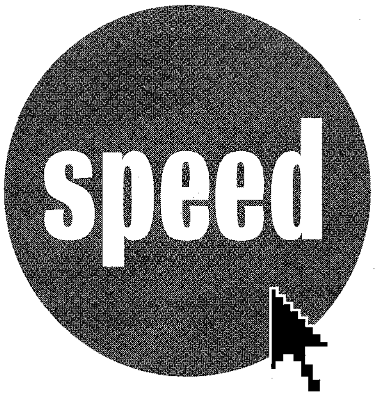

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Fall Antiques Show—The twentieth year of Sanford Smith's must-see show, which emphasizes American art and antiques. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Nov. 19-22, with a benefit preview on Nov. 18. For information, call 777-5218.)

Stella Fine Art and Photography Show—A hundred dealers. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 26th St. Nov. 20-22. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Virginia Beahan & Laura McPhee—"No Ordinary Land," a selection of a dozen medium- and large-scale color landscapes of places ranging from California to Iceland to Sri Lanka. Through Dec. 23. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

Larry Gianettino—Large, vivid, and often disturbing Cibachromes of small children's toys; "Bunny with a Head Wound" is a typical title. Through Jan. 16. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

Stanley Greenberg—Haunting black-and-white photographs of hidden, nearly inaccessible tunnels and aqueducts below the surface of New York City. Through Nov. 27. (Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. 935-3960.)

"Aero"—Images of aviation from the twenties through the fifties. Through Dec. 30. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

"Camera Work"—Photogravures from Stieglitz's legendary turn-of-the-century journal by, among others, Steichen, Käsebier, Coburn, and Strand. Through Jan. 7. (Platinum, 551 W. 22nd St. 352-0070.)

"The Edge of Night"—Landscape photography from New York, Los Angeles, and Tokyo, by Richard Rothman, Catherine Opie, and Tokihiro Sato. Through Dec. 12. (Leubsdorf gallery, Hunter College, 68th St. and Lexington Ave. 772-4991. Open Mondays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)

International Center of Photography—"Walker Evans, Simple Secrets," a show of works from the collection of Marian and Benjamin A. Hill. . . . ¶ "Intimate City: The Photographs of Thomas Roma." Both shows through Nov. 29. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Man Ray: Photography and Its Double," a large show of works from the artist's archives, which are housed at the Pompidou Centre, in Paris. Through Jan. 24. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

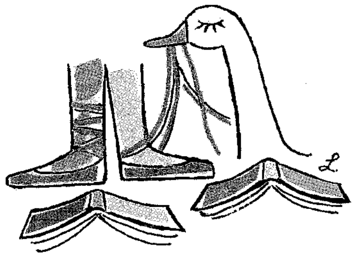
Short List—**ANSEL ADAMS**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Dec. 5. . . . **LYNN DAVIS**, Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 16. . . . **JIM DINE**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through Nov. 28. . . . **STAN DOUGLAS**, Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074. Through Nov. 21. . . . **JOHN DUGDALE**, Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays; through Jan. 3. . . . **LEE FRIEDLANDER**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Dec. 31. . . . **NAN GOLDIN**, Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through Nov. 28. . . . **KIM IACONO**, Arsenal gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. 360-8163. Open weekdays, 9 to 5; through Dec. 10. . . . **BILL JACOBSON**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through Nov. 28. . . . **NEIL LEIFER**, Pop International Galleries, 473 West Broadway. 533-4262. Through Dec. 15. . . . **ARTHUR LEIPZIG**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through Dec. 5. . . . **MICK LINDBERG**, Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Dec. 5. . . . **ABELARDO MORELL**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Dec. 5. . . . **JOHN SCHABEL**, Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Through Dec. 5. . . . **AARON SISKIND** and **MARIO GIACOMELLI**, Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Both shows through Dec. 5. . . . **GEORGE A. TICE** and **DOLORÈS MARAT**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through Dec. 23.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Balletomania

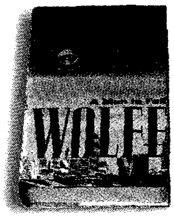
JUST in time for New York City Ballet's fiftieth anniversary (which is being celebrated this week) come a number of new books about ballet, which enliven the enduring appeal of this most romantic of art forms. The company's birthday present to itself, **Tributes: Celebrating Fifty Years of New York City Ballet** (Morrow), combines essays, poems, and the reminiscences of eminent admirers—Paul Taylor, Joan Didion, Philip Johnson—with set designs, photographs of dancers in action, and paintings inspired by the ballets. The company's rather hand-to-mouth beginnings are recalled in a new collection of the late Edwin Denby's **Dance Writings and Poetry** (Yale), which has the seminal dance critic writing on everything from Balanchine to the Rockettes.



CATHERINE LAZURE

Neophytes intimidated by the knowledgeable posturings of veteran balletomanes will find a useful guide to dancespeak in Robert Greskovic's **Ballet 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving the Ballet** (Hyperion), which is designed, Mikhail Baryshnikov says in the foreword, for people who feel left out of the conversations at intermission. No one understood the need to popularize ballet better than Rudolf Nureyev. Diane Solway's **Nureyev: His Life** (Morrow) examines not only his electrifying dancing but also the complex public persona of the tireless self-fashioner.

Another fascinating life in dance will be chronicled early next year with the publication of a recently discovered unfinished memoir by the great modern-dance choreographer José Limón (Wesleyan). Limón describes his tough childhood in Mexico and his late conversion to dance with grace and a rueful wit. Also coming is **Collusion: Memoir of a Young Girl and Her Ballet Master** (HarperFlamingo), by Evan Zimroth, a dancer turned novelist and poet. The powerful account of her domination by a perfectionist teacher focusses on her own masochistic acquiescence; it makes "The Red Shoes" look like "Fame."



A MAN IN FULL *by Tom Wolfe* Few 20th-century writers have chronicled, dissected, and explained our society as brilliantly and savagely as Tom Wolfe. Now, with *A Man in Full*, his first new book in over a decade, Wolfe turns his exacting eye to the New South: Atlanta, Georgia — a racially mixed, late-century boomtown full of fresh wealth and wily politicians. And like the city itself, protagonist Charlie Croker, former football star, now aging conglomerate king, is about to have his oversized ego slammed up against reality. *A Man in Full* is a must-read for Wolfe enthusiasts and initiates alike; for anyone who appreciates spot-on social commentary and good story telling. **For the largest selection of online books, seek out barnesandnoble.com. It's easier and faster.**

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

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OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**le nozze di figaro,** with Felicity Lott, Cecilia Bartoli (as Susanna), Susanne Mentzer, Richard Bernstein (as Figaro), and Dwayne Croft; conducted by James Levine. (Nov. 18 and Nov. 24 at 8.) . . . With Bryn Terfel instead of Mr. Bernstein. (Nov. 21 at 8.) . . . **la bohème,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Gwynne Geyer, Frank Lopardo, and Gino Quilico; Marco Armiliato. (Nov. 19 at 8 and Nov. 21 at 1:30.) . . . **tosca,** with Maria Guleghina, Richard Leech, and Juan Pons; Nello Santi. (Nov. 20 at 8.) . . . **la traviata,** in the opening performance of a new production by Franco Zeffirelli, with the cast (much revised since the production was conceived) now including Patricia Racette, Marcelo Alvarez, and Vladimir Chernov; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 23 at 8.) . . . **note:** On Nov. 22 at 3, various stars join Luciano Pavarotti in performances of fully staged acts from "L'Elisir d'Amore," "La Bohème," and "Aida," in celebration of the tenor's thirtieth anniversary with the company; Mr. Levine conducts. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—Final performances of the company's fall season. Nov. 18 at 7:30 and Nov. 21 at 8: "Rigoletto." . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 7:30 and Nov. 21 at 1:30: "Of Mice and Men," by Carlisle Floyd. . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 1:30: "Madama Butterfly." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Presenting Nino Rota's "Il Cappello di Paglia di Firenze" (curiously known in English as "The Italian Straw Hat"). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Nov. 18 and Nov. 20 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 2. For information about tickets, call 769-7406.)

Amato Opera Company—Final performances of a double bill comprising Mascagni's "L'Amico Fritz" and Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 21 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 2:30. . . . **note:** On Nov. 21 at 11:30 A.M., the company offers a family performance of "Pagliacci." Notwithstanding the clown suits, it's a pretty steamy opera—jealousy, adultery, domestic violence escalating into murder. Parental guidance is suggested.)

Mannes Camerata—Presenting a fully staged production of "Ordo Virtutem," a morality play composed in 1155 by the abbess Hildegard von Bingen, whose works are ubiquitously represented in concert halls during her nine-hundredth-anniversary year. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 229-5488. Nov. 21 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 4 and 8.)

Teatro Grattacielo—Fiora Contino conducts Mascagni's "Iris," fully costumed but not staged. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 23 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Christian Thielemann conducting. Nov. 18 at 6:45: Strauss's "Alpine Symphony," in an hour-long concert for the after-work crowd. . . . ¶ Nov. 19 and Nov. 21 at 8 and Nov. 20 at 2: William Schuman's "A Song of Orpheus" (featuring cellist Carter Brey) and Strauss's "Alpine Symphony."

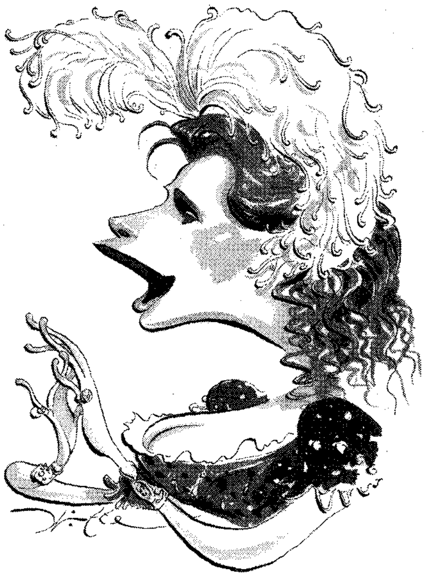
Collegiate Chorale—Robert Bass directs the choir and the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Mozart's Requiem (in Franz Beyer's edition) and his motet "Exsultate, Jubilate" (with soprano Pamela Coburn), as well as Haydn's "Te Deum." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 18 at 7:30.)

Clarion Music Society—Presenting selections from Monteverdi's Seventh Book of Madrigals. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 722-4448. Nov. 18 at 8.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson leads works with a Brazilian flavor, with singer Susannah McCorkle and flutist Paula Robison. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 20 at 8.)

National Chorale—Bach's B-Minor Mass, with Martin Josman directing. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Cappella Oratoriana—Dennis Bernard Delaney directs small-scale works by Schütz. (St. Luke's In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Nov. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door.)



BIG BREAK: *Some opera singers reach stardom through defining moments, others through steady persistence. If the young American soprano Patricia Racette emerges this week as an international star, she will have arrived through a combination of the two. Franco Zeffirelli's new production of "La Traviata" at the Metropolitan Opera was not created to spotlight her talents, but when Renée Fleming withdrew from the role of Violetta three weeks ago Racette was tapped to move up from the replacement cast. Opening night, on November 23, qualifies as a defining moment, but Racette has already shown her dramatic mettle in such highly charged roles as the title character of Tobias Picker's "Emmeline" and Ellen Orford in "Peter Grimes." By taking on the part of Verdi's doomed courtesan, however, she is begging comparison with the century's greatest prima donnas, from Galli-Curci to Muzio to Callas.*

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts David Diamond's "Concerto for Small Orchestra," Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1 (featuring Daniel Lee), Wallingford Riegger's "Study in Sonority," and Bizet's Symphony in C Major. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 21 at 8 and Nov. 22 at 5.)

St. Patrick's Cathedral Concert Choir—It's official: the Christmas-music season has arrived. In the year's first concert of strictly seasonal selections, John West directs the choir and a chamber orchestra in Saint-Saëns's rarely performed "Christmas Oratorio," following a performance of Corelli's "Christmas" Concerto. (St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Ave. at 51st St. Nov. 22 at 7:15. Admission by contribution.)

Cerddorion—The twenty-six-voice choir, directed by Susanne Peck, performs works by Brahms and Schubert, as well as Joseph Rheinberger's Mass for Double Choir in E-Flat Major. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. Nov. 22 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 774-4105.)

RECITALS

eighth blackbird—This sextet, assembled in 1996 from the ranks of forward-thinking students at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, takes its lowercase name from Wallace Stevens's poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." That poem inspired Thomas Albert's "Thirteen Ways," written expressly for the group, which figures on its New York début program, along with Joan Tower's "Petroushskates," Fred Lehrdahl's "Fantasy Études," and Jacob Druckman's "Come Round." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 18 at 7:30.)

William Trafka—Organist, in a recital that includes Franck's "Grande Pièce Symphonique" and an excerpt from Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (in his own transcription). (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 378-0248. Nov. 18 at 7:30.)

Romanesca—The early-music trio, comprising lute and theorbo player Nigel North (its founder), violinist Andrew Manze, and harpsichordist John Toll, has gained notice for the infectious energy and rhapsodic freedom of its interpretations. In this stop on their first North American tour, the instrumentalists offer Italian, Austrian, and English chamber works from the seventeenth century. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Samuel Ramey and Warren Jones—The bass and the pianist offer arias by Handel and Verdi, as well as songs by Stephen Foster, Paul Bowles, Cole Porter, and others. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 19 at 7:30.)

Bargemusic—Presenting solo and chamber works by Haydn, Mozart (his Piano Trio in E-Flat Major, K. 542), and Schubert (his Piano Trio in E-Flat Major). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Nov. 19 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 4.)

Joan Morris and William Bolcom—The voice-and-piano duo turns its attention to songs by two masters whose centennials are currently being celebrated: George Gershwin and Vincent Youmans. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Intimate Dvořák—Performances of the composer's "Cypresses," for string quartet, and (with pianist Anton Kuerti) his A-Major Piano Quintet. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 21 at 7.)

Constance Hauman—The soprano presents a recital, augmented with commentary, film clips, and slides, that explores the music of German and Austrian composers who fled to Hollywood during the nineteen-thirties and forties; including songs and arias by Weill, Schoenberg, and Korngold. Pianist William Vendice assists. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 21 at 8.)

Kyung-Wha Chung—The violinist, returning to more active concertizing after a period of relative time-out to raise her family, performs Schubert's A-Minor Sonatina and sonatas by Bartók (his Second) and Schumann (his Second), with pianist Itamar Golan. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 22 at 3.)

Phantasm—A consort of four viols, performing the members' own arrangement of Bach's "The Art of Fugue," as well as fantasies by seventeenth-century English composers. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Nov. 22 at 4.)

Andrew Wilde—The pianist performs Haydn's F-Minor Variations and Sonata No. 52, Schubert's Sonata in G Major (D. 894), and

MICHAEL WITTE

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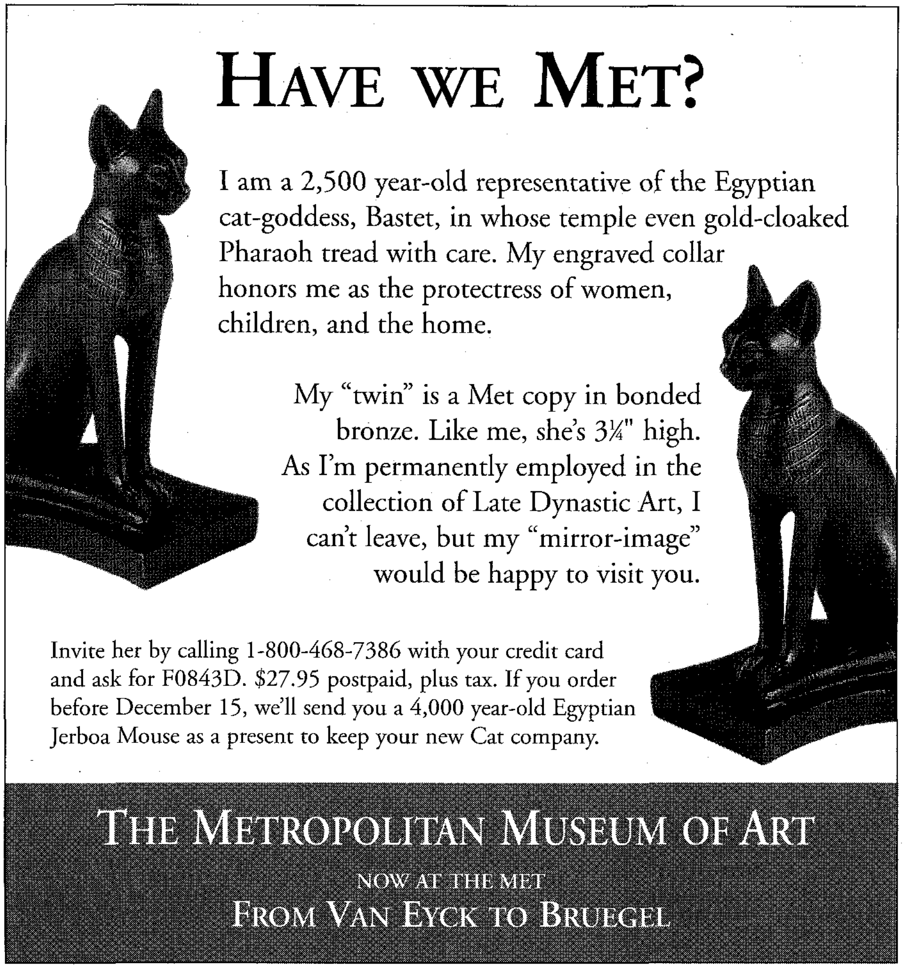
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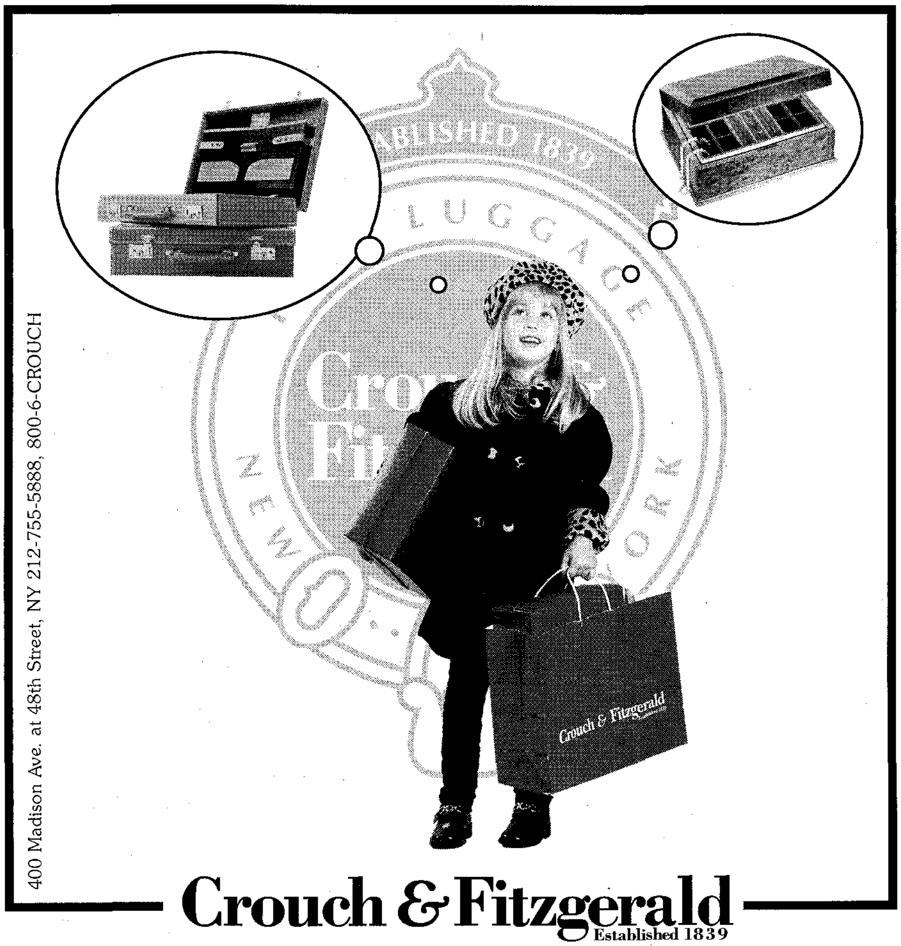
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Chopin's "Barcarolle." (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Nov. 22 at 5.)

PARNASSUS—The modern-music group offers Carter's "In Sleep, in Thunder," Wolpe's "La Malade Imaginaire" Suite, and works by Jonathan Harvey, Alba Potes, and Maurice Wright. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 23 at 8.)

JOZEF VAN WISSEM—A potentially dislocating performance in which Mr. van Wissem plays late-Renaissance works for the ten-course lute in front of video projections and photographs of the Hitler Jugend movement of the nineteen-thirties (during which the early-music movement first started to attract the interest of performance-oriented musicologists in Germany). (Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St. 219-3006. Nov. 23 at 11 P.M.)

KAREN GOMYO—This Japanese-Canadian violinist plays the opening recital of the season for Young Concert Artists, which, for better or worse, proudly proclaims in its publicity mailing that it "joins [the] trend of promoting ever-younger artists." At sixteen, Ms. Gomyo is far from being the youngest fiddler to make a play for the big time, but she is the youngest that Y.C.A. has ever tried to launch (Richard Goode, Murray Perahia, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet having all reached the advanced age of eighteen before they were added to the Y.C.A. roster). In this recital, Ms. Gomyo is joined by pianist Rohan De Silva to perform sonatas by Janáček, Prokofiev (his First), and Mozart, among other works. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 24 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"100 IDEAS FOR NEW YORK'S FUTURE"—In honor of New York City's centennial, the Municipal Art Society solicited ideas from a slew of architects, activists, and city planners. The hundred proposals on display cover the usual ground (housing, transit, Columbus Circle) as well as the always vexing civic problem of what to do about Yankee Stadium. Consider urbanist Douglas Woodward's "Sketches for the Stadium as Flâneur." It calls for mounting the House That Ruth Built on a platform constructed from retired supertankers and shipping it around the city so that each borough could enjoy sixteen home games. The one remaining game, Mr. Woodward proposes, could be played at sea. Now that's vision. (457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Through Nov. 30.)

READINGS—Nov. 22 at 3: By actress Vanessa Redgrave, from "Mrs. Dalloway." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 7: By poets John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch and by painters Larry Rivers and Jane Freilicher (who will also be showing slides of their works), from the poetry of Ashbery, Koch, Frank O'Hara, and James Schuyler. David Lehman, author of "The Last Avant-Garde: The Making of the New York School of Poets," is the host. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 8: By playwright Athol Fugard, from his most recent work, "The Captain's Tiger." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

TALKS—Nov. 18 at 6:30: Allen Mincho, a professional currency dealer, talks about the boom in the banking and financial markets. Not the current one, but the one in the eighteen-nineties. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400.) . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 6:15: Morgan Library curator William M. Griswold discusses his latest exhibition, "Master Drawings from the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums." (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347.) . . . ¶ Nov. 24 at 7: Graphic artist Eric Drooker presents a slide lecture drawn from his book "Street Posters and Ballads," an illustrated chronicle of life on the Lower East Side. (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Bambino Chic

Say what you will about the corporate muscle of BabyGap, but by taking children's clothes out of fussy boutiques and sterile department stores it's made shopping for our young pals more impulsive and, well, fashionable. Three independent shops that carry their own designs, all of them south of Fourteenth Street, have capitalized on the vogue for toddler togs.

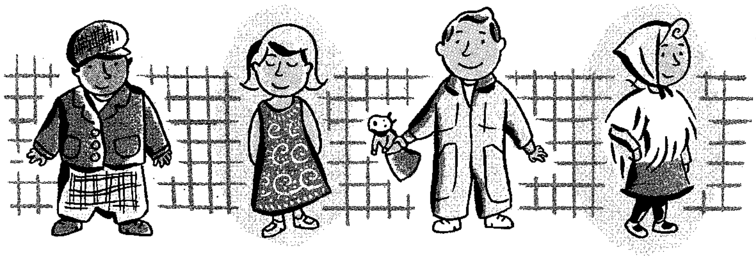
"The Gap is like Mao enforcing uniforms on the population" says Susan Lane, owner of Tribeca's **Bu and the Duck** (106 Franklin St.; 431-9226). "You can quote me." Lane comes to her hard-line stance from eighteen years of designing clothes in Taipei. "When I got back, I realized American children are the worst-dressed children in the world," she says. Lane's signature jacket, intended for either boys or girls, is a gray three-button blazer that has a charming misshapen quality ($65). "My inspiration has really been old photos of Ellis Island—that and the Little Rascals," she explains. The material is shrunken wool, which, of course, is big at very grown-up places like Comme des Garçons.

Most of the clothes at Bu and the Duck are meant for either gender, but Lane found the archetype for her little-girl dress ($100) among her mother's childhood clothes from the late twenties. It looks like a gingerbread cutout, and it comes in several fabrics, including a dark tartan flannel. "I like to use what are usually unfeminine fabrics in the girls' clothes," Lane points out, "and kids look better in dark colors anyway. In Japan all the best children's clothes are black. Baby blue and Pepto-Bismol pink are so overdone."

The brand-new **Calypso Enfants** (284 Mulberry St.; 965-8910) is the offspring of the sexy, mobbed Mott Street store Calypso, where everything, it seems, is see-through or pre-wrinkled or both. The narrow, white children's branch carries at least ten types of sailor jersey, but it's only because Christiane Celle, the owner, is French, and so has a deep belief that children must be dressed as sailors. The classic—white with thin blue stripes and a boat neck—is by Honoré, and, at $55, it can double as a miniature Picasso costume.

When Celle designs the clothes herself, however, she abandons the nautical and focusses on the heartbreakers-to-be who will one day, she hopes, graduate to the older store. A simple sleeveless dress in dyed wool with embroidered chains of flowers comes in lush colors and looks like the casual getup of an exotic princess. "They started out as shawls from Rajasthan, typical Indian design," Celle says. "I made some skirts for my other store, and then I had just enough material left over for a little girl." The tweed jumper has a plucky, junior-detective look, with a handy half-moon pouch for evidence. These dresses, sized for ages two through five, range from $45 to $60.

You may not find many actual children at these stores. But you will over in baby-crazy Brooklyn, on Smith Street's emerging shopping promenade. Ground zero for the scrappy urchins is the spare, two-month-old **Hoyt & Bond** (248 Smith St.; 718-488-8283), which displays a toy xylophone up front; more often than not, some young customer is banging away on it. Here you'll find clothes that "don't scream anything—no logos, no decoration," says the proprietor, Elizabeth Beer. Her garments tend to be hipper or more sophisticated than anything most parents are likely to own. For example, the white guayabera ($25), the national shirt of Cuba, is full of authentic detail: buttons, pockets, and pleats done just right. A kid in this shirt will whisk past doormen at clubs you can't get near. The coverall ($95) should appeal to future grease monkeys, fighter pilots, and rock stars. It has an array of useful pockets and comes in a low-down battleship gray. In the shop's extensive line of knits for girls, a standout is the A-line mock-turtleneck dress in, of course, black ($88). When Beer suggests topping it off with a periwinkle angora poncho and matching hood ($150 and $45), you can practically hear the crying jags of envy on the playground.



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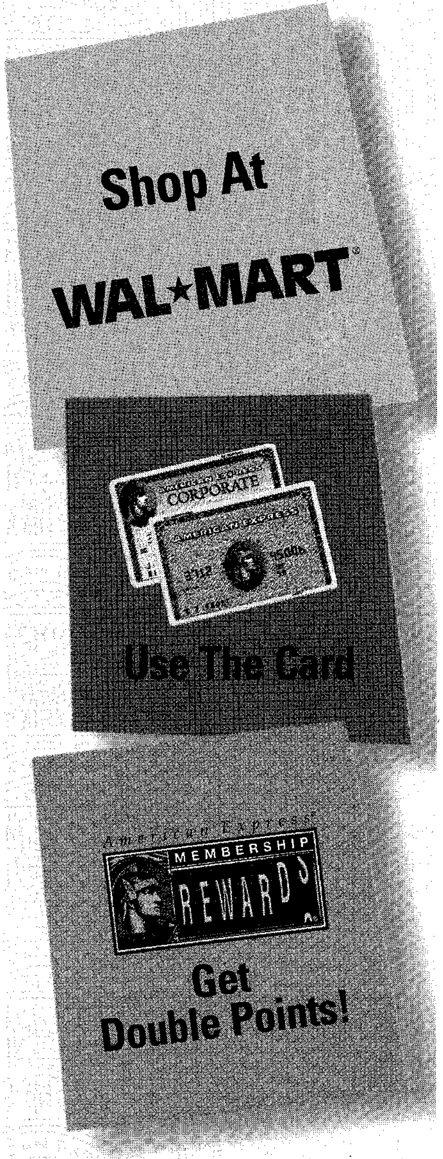

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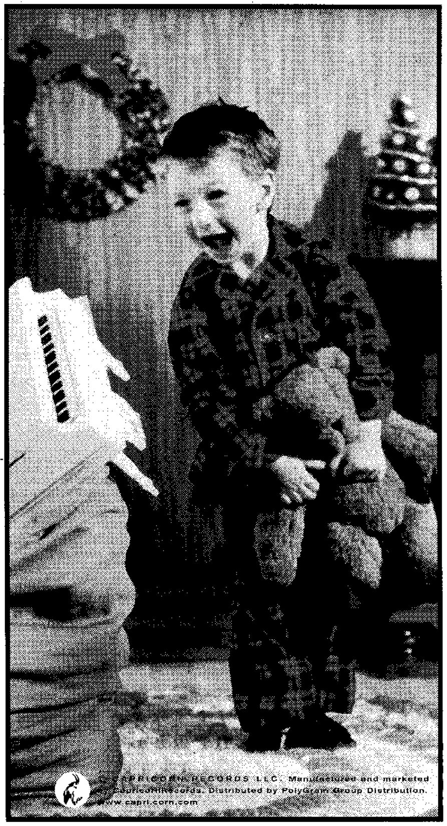

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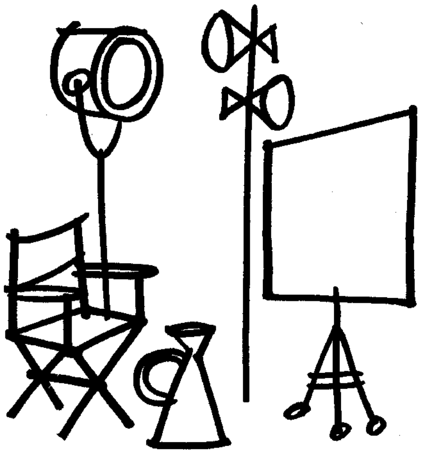
THE MOVIES



OPENING

Celebrity—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 20. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Central Station—A young motherless boy searches for his father in the Brazilian countryside. With Vinicius de Oliveira and Fernanda Montenegro; directed by Walter Salles. In Portuguese. Opening Nov. 20. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Enemy of the State—Tony Scott's thriller about an attorney (Will Smith) framed for murder. Also with Gene Hackman and Jon Voight. Opening Nov. 20. (Embassy 1 and Embassy 2.)

Hi Life—A romantic comedy, directed by Roger Hedden, with Eric Stoltz, Campbell Scott, and Moira Kelly. Opening Nov. 20. (The Screening Room.)

The Rugrats Movie—An animated film based on the Nickelodeon television show. Directed by Norton Virgien and Igor Kovalyov. Opening Nov. 20.

Savior—Dennis Quaid plays a hardened soldier who finds his humanity while caring for an orphaned child. Directed by Peter Antonijevic. Opening Nov. 20. (Village East Cinemas.)

Storefront Hitchcock—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Nov. 18.

Sue—A drama about a homeless and unemployed young woman (Anna Thomson) in Manhattan. Written and directed by Amos Kollek. Opening Nov. 20. (Quad Cinema.)

Waking Ned Devine—A comedy about two friends in an Irish village (Ian Bannen and David Kelly) who seek out a lottery winner in hopes of sharing the prize. Written and directed by Kirk Jones. Opening Nov. 20. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Antz—The latest showpiece for computer animation, with all the contoured, suspiciously gleaming perfection that this entails. In this case, most of the characters are ants—a curious choice, since they all tend to look roughly the same, and it takes a while to sort out the heroes from the villains. Fortunately, help is at hand from the absurdly starry cast of voices; the leading ant, Z, is played by Woody Allen, and his new royal girlfriend by Sharon Stone. (In your dreams, Woody.) Gene Hackman speaks the role of a murderous general, with Christopher Walken as his sidekick; best of all is Sylvester Stallone, cast completely against type as a dim but helpful hunk of brawn. The plot is a swift, if confusing, account of Z's ascent to a station above that of his millions of fellow-workers; the directors—Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson—seem slightly unsure about what they think of old-fashioned working-class solidarity.—*Anthony Lane* (10/19/98) (Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and 64th and 2nd. . . . ¶ Embassy 2; through Nov. 19. . . . ¶ Embassy 3; starting Nov. 20.)

Elizabeth—This grisly, flamboyant account of the Virgin Queen's early days as a monarch has been made with the extravagant panache of a fashion magazine launching an experimental issue. The color scheme is predominantly black on black, the tone one of chic brutality. Yet no one will be bored. Screenwriter Michael Hirst alters and conflates events that took place over many years—by degrees, Elizabeth (Cate Blanchett), a Protestant surrounded by powerful Catholics, takes control of England by pulling off a kind of internal coup d'état. The means of her ascension is Sir Francis Walsingham (Geoffrey Rush), a perfect Machiavellian character who serves the Queen as adviser, deadly assassin, and spy. Elizabeth's climb to power, however, is a personal disaster: the supple-waisted maiden with long red hair becomes stiff and harsh, emerging from her youth white-faced and trapped in the armor of a thick brocade dress. The movie is a horror film masquerading as a historical pageant. With Richard Attenborough, Kathy Burke, and Joseph Fiennes as Robert Dudley, Elizabeth's slender, ardent, and possibly treacherous lover. Directed by Shekhar Kapur.—*David Denby* (11/16/98) (Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

Gods and Monsters—In the nineteen-fifties, the British-born director James Whale, who had lent depth and dignity to the horror film with "Frankenstein" and "Bride of Frankenstein," idled away his time, all but forgotten by the movie industry, in Pacific Palisades, California; eventually, he drowned in his pool. Bill Condon's elegant and tactful picture, founded on Christopher Bram's novel "Father of Frankenstein," wonders what might have happened in those final days. The inquiry draws fine performances from Ian McKellen as the dandyish Whale and from Brendan Fraser as his (wholly fictitious) gardener, Clayton Boone, with whom the older man becomes obsessed. It is more than a crush, not least because of Boone's head: blockish and flat-topped, it reminds you instantly of Frankenstein's monster, and it leads Whale into a reverie about that forlorn figure. The film leans rather too heavily on Whale's lubricity, but the flashbacks to his movie sets and the snapshots of sharklike Hollywood society are done with great loyalty and wit. Not since "The Spirit of the Beehive," in which a little girl met the same lumbering monster, has anyone made it seem so natural to be haunted. With Lynn Redgrave as a Puritan housekeeper.—*A.L.* (11/9/98) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

Happiness—The Jordans (Ben Gazzara and Louise Lasser) are ending their frayed marriage, while their daughters (Jane Adams, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Cynthia Stevenson) look wearily for love, and their respectable son-in-law (Dylan Baker) dreams of slaughter and plans his molestation of underage boys. Just an ordinary day in New Jersey, as far as filmmaker Todd Solondz is concerned, but his obsession with sexual aberration somehow flattens his roster of characters into uniformity; when the large, kindly Kristina (Camryn Manheim) turns out to have dismembered her doorman and frozen his body parts, you can hardly be bothered to take offense.—*A.L.* (10/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

Life Is Beautiful—Would that it were. The great, donkey-faced Italian clown Roberto Benigni attempts an ambitious fable of comedy's redemptive power. He plays an Italian Jew who keeps alive his little boy's innocence in a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the routines of the camp are no more than an intricate game staged for his son's benefit. After all, Benigni appears to be saying, the Germans were indulging a fantasy, too—the fantasy of total control. But Benigni's ironic counter-reality undermines this movie, not the Nazis, who were beyond ridicule for the same reason that they were beyond rationality. Totalitarianism makes the fantastic literal—that is its demonic appeal. Benigni's jokes and games just aren't enough, and you leave the movie thinking that what's touching is not Benigni's ministrations to the little boy but his own need to believe in comedy as salvation. With Nicoletta Braschi as the hero's wife, and Giorgio Cantarini, who has the heartbreaking quality of the children in the old neorealist movies, as the boy. Set design by Danilo Donati. Cinematography by Tonino Delli Colli. In Italian.—*D.D.* (11/16/98) (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

Meet Joe Black—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Beekman, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

Le Million (1931)—René Clair at his exquisite best; no one else has ever been able to make a comedy move with such delicate, dreamlike inevitability. René Lefèvre plays the poor young painter who has a winning lottery ticket—only he hasn't quite got it; it was in the pocket of a coat that got sold to a secondhand shop. The entire film, which Clair adapted from a stage musical, is the hero's chase after the ticket, with his creditors, his girl (Annabella), his friends, and the police chasing after him. (The sequence in the opera house is clearly the inspiration for a sequence in "A Night at the Opera.") This movie is lyrical, choreographic, giddy—it's the best French musical of its period. In French, with no English subtitles.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 22.)

Pleasantville—A nerdy brother (Tobey Maguire) and a slutty sister (Reese Witherspoon) who live in a dysfunctional single-parent home get beamed into an idyllic fifties TV show and discover that family values weren't so great after all. Gary Ross's fantasy is a much needed plea for the value of art and freethinking, but his most intriguing ideas are never fully developed.—*Sarah Kerr* (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

Opening Nov. 20, Anna Thomson in Amos Kollek's "Sue."

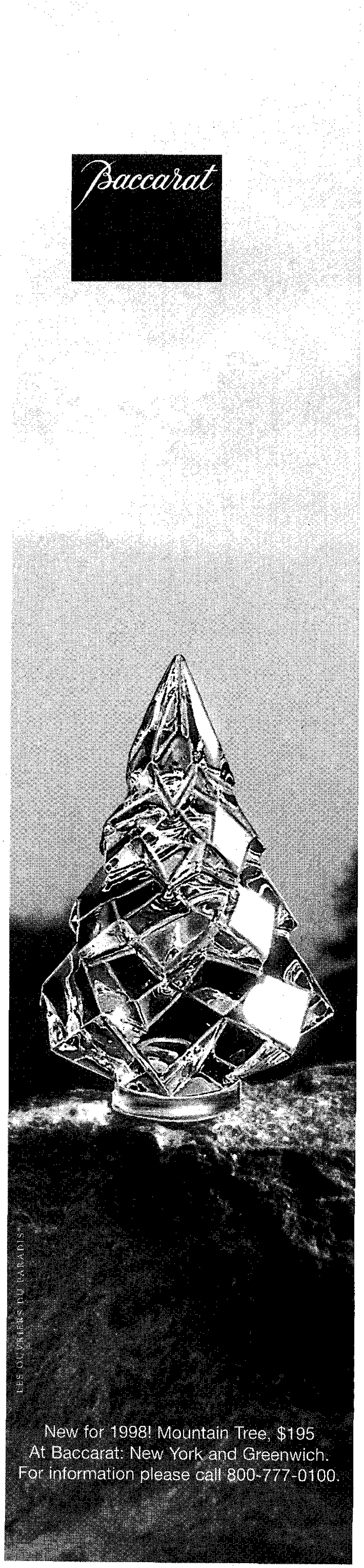
DON DOE

The Siege—New York is terrorized by Islamic militants. Bombs go off everywhere; casualties climb into the hundreds; no one can go *shopping*. A hard-driving F.B.I. agent (Denzel Washington) kills some of the bad guys, but not all of them, so a sardonic, fascist U.S. Army general (Bruce Willis) declares martial law and seals off Brooklyn with tanks and troops. Director Edward Zwick turns on the sorrowful spectacle: The Army rounds up every young Arab-American male in the borough and herds them all into an open-air stadium. The F.B.I. agent then lectures the general on civil liberty. Torture is bad, he says. Shredding the Constitution is bad. "The Siege" offers an improbable set of circumstances and then gets all hot under the collar as it rejects the preposterous situation that it has set up for itself. The filmmakers peddle fear and then try to claim the moral high ground; the treatment is foolish, confused, and borderline irresponsible. With Annette Bening as a shady C.I.A. agent who has ambiguous relations with terrorists, and Tony Shalhoub as an Arab-American federal agent. Screenplay by Lawrence Wright (a *New Yorker* contributor) and Menno Meyjes.—*D.D.* (11/16/98) (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Storefront Hitchcock—Jonathan Demme's almost ascetically simple concert film shows Englishman Robyn Hitchcock performing alone, in a storefront on Fourteenth Street. Under Demme's pared-down scrutiny, the aging cult rocker emerges as a far better poet than a crafter of tunes; he sings like a teen idol from the British Invasion era, but his witty gloom is closer to Hieronymus Bosch. At his best he's a brave, solemn comedian, musing between songs about cancer and the fact that Julius Caesar was a very short man.—*S.K.* (Film Forum; starting Nov. 18.)

Velvet Goldmine—Quite an achievement: the American director Todd Haynes revisits the world of London glam rock and manages to make it look dull. He and his costume designer certainly lay on the peacock flamboyance of the nineteen-seventies, but none of the strange creatures concerned appear to be having any fun. Jonathan Rhys Meyers, of whom great things have been predicted, gives a curiously thin and flat-voiced performance as Brian Slade, a David Bowie figure of suitably indeterminate sexual preference. The real Bowie would not allow his songs to be used, so we get rip-offs instead—accomplished enough, but incapable of generating the required nostalgia. Ewan McGregor has more of a laugh as Curt Wild, a version of Iggy Pop, but the picture refuses to follow his example. It has a busy surface, with Haynes switching between high Ken Russell camp and dreary journalistic investigation, but the tactic feels less like the search for a Rosebud than desperation. Plenty of glitter, though, if you like that sort of thing. With Toni Collette and Eddie Izzard.—*A.L.* (11/9/98) (Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—What's astonishing about the digitally remastered print with new stereo sound is not its look—which is



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gorgeous—but its talent, which is, and always was, awesome. The Yip Harburg–Harold Arlen score is magnificent; the combined vaudeville experience of Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr can't be topped by contemporary entertainers; and Judy Garland is, well, Judy Garland. On the big screen, the story line also seems crisp and subtle. There's a sense of wonder and joy in every frame of this film, which is why it's evergreen.—*John Lahr* (Astor Plaza, Coronet Cinema, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

At MOMA, films directed by René Clair.

ALSO PLAYING

AMERICAN HISTORY X: Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square. . . . **APT PUPIL:** Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and State. . . . **BELOVED** (reviewed in our issue of 10/26 & 11/2/98): Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE BIG CHILL:** Lincoln Square and 64th and 2nd. . . . **BRIDE OF CHUCKY:** Criterion Center and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **THE CELEBRATION:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **THE CRUISE:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **DANCING AT LUGHNASA:** BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square. . . . **I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS:** Guild, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE IMPOSTORS:** Sutton. . . . **I STILL KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square. . . . **JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **LIVING OUT LOUD:** Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 72nd Street East, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **PRACTICAL MAGIC:** First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and State. . . . **RIVER RED:** Murray Hill Cinemas. . . . **RONIN** (10/5/98): Criterion Center and First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **RUSH HOUR:** Metro Cinema and State. . . . **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** (8/3/98): 59th Street East Cinema and Union Square. . . . **SOLDIER:** Criterion Center and Metro Cinema. . . . **TEN BENNY:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY:** Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Regency. . . . **URBAN LEGEND:** Criterion Center. . . . **THE WATERBOY:** 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **WELCOME TO WOOP WOOP:** Union Square.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** A program of films directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. Nov. 18: "Carnegie Hall" (1947), "My Son, the Hero" (1943), and "Jive Junction" (1943). . . . Nov. 19: "Isle of Forgotten Sins" (1944), "The Wife of Monte Cristo" (1946), and "The Pirates of Capri" (1949). . . . Nov. 20-21: "The Naked Dawn" (1955) and "Ruthless" (1948). . . . Nov. 22: "The Black Cat" (1934) and "Bluebeard" (1944). . . . Nov. 24: "Damaged Lives" (1933), "Girls in Chains" (1943), and "Her Sister's Secret" (1946). . . . ¶ A program of Buster Keaton films. Nov. 23: "The Cameraman" (1928, Edward Sedgwick, Jr.) and "Spite Marriage" (1929, Sedgwick). . . . **THEATRE 3:** "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films from Brazil; all in Portuguese, with English subtitles. Nov. 19 at 2:30: "São Bernardo" (1972, Leon Hirszman). . . . Nov. 19 at 6: "Twenty Years Later" (1984, Eduardo Coutinho). . . . Nov. 20 at 2:30: "Strong Meat" (1985, André Klotzel). . . . Nov. 20 at 6: "Matrimonial Warfare" (1974, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade). . . . Nov. 20 at 8: "Gaijin" (1980, Tizuka Yamasaki). . . . Nov. 21 at 2: "Bye Bye Brazil" (1980, Carlos Diegues). . . . Nov. 21 at 5: "They Don't Wear Black Tie" (1981, Hirszman). . . . Nov. 22 at 2: "Bang Bang" (1971, Andrea Tonacci). . . . Nov. 22 at 5: "The Time of the Star" (1985, Suzana Amaral). . . . Nov. 23 at 2:30: "Everything's Fine" (1978, Arnaldo Jabor). . . . Nov. 23 at 6: "Memories of Prison" (1983, Nelson Pereira dos Santos). . . . Nov. 24 at 2:30: "Nights of the Sertão" (1984, Carlos Alberto Prates Correia). . . . Nov. 24 at 6: "Assalto ao Trem Pagador" (1962, Roberto Farias). . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 6 and Nov. 20 at 3: "Wasteland" (1997, Andrei Schwartz), a documentary. . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 6: One program in a series about the history of 8-mm. film and video in the United States. . . . ¶ A series of films directed by René Clair. Nov. 20 at 6 and Nov. 22 at 1: "The Crazy Ray" (1923; a silent film) and two short films. . . . Nov. 20 at 8: "Silence Is Golden" (1947; in French). . . . Nov. 21 at 1: "The Imaginary Voyage" (1925; a silent film, with French intertitles). . . . Nov. 21 at 3: "The Italian Straw Hat" (1927; a silent film). . . . Nov. 21 at 5: "The Two Timid Souls" (1928; a silent film, with French intertitles). . . . Nov. 22 at 3: "Under the Roofs of Paris" (1930; in French, with no English subtitles). . . . Nov. 22 at 5: "Le Million" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 2 and 6: "Long Day's Journey Into Night" (1997, David Wellington), with William Hutt and Martha Henry.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films by Dariush Mehrjui and other Iranian directors; all in Farsi, with English subtitles. Nov. 19 at 2: "OK Mister" (1978, Parviz Kimiavi). . . . Nov. 19 at 4: "Postman" (1972; with German subtitles). . . . Nov. 20 at 2 and 6:15 and Nov. 21 at 8:45: "The May Lady" (1997, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad). . . . Nov. 20 at 4 and 8:45: "Pari" (1995). . . . Nov. 21 at 4 and Nov. 22 at 4 and 8:45: "The Cycle" (1978). . . . Nov. 21-22 at 6: "The Custodian" (1976, Khosrow Haritash). . . . Nov. 22 at 2: "Bag of Rice" (1996, Mohammed-Ali Talebi). . . . Nov. 23 at 2 and 6:15: "Night of the Hunchback" (1964, Farrokh Ghaffari). . . . Nov. 23 at 4 and 8:15: "The Tenants" (1992). . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 6:30: "Cappuccino" (1998, Craig Ross, Jr.). . . . ¶ Nov. 19 at 9: "Voices Unheard" (1997) and other films by Beth B, who will be present.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Nov. 21 at 2: "A Free Soul" (1931, Clarence Brown), with Norma Shearer. . . . Nov. 22 at 2: "Why Change Your Wife?" (1919, Cecil B. De Mille; silent), with Gloria Swanson. . . . Nov. 22 at 4: "Zaza" (1923, Allan Dwan; silent), with Swanson.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—A retrospective (through Dec. 22) of films featuring Catherine Deneuve. Nov. 24 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Convent" (1995, Manoel de Oliveira; in English, Portuguese, and French).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films made by United Artists. Nov. 24 at 7: "The Thief of Bagdad" (1924, Raoul Walsh; a silent film). . . . Nov. 24 at 9:30: "Tom Jones" (1963, Tony Richardson).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3587)—A program of French films, 1958-98; in French, with English subtitles. Nov. 18 at 2:30 and Nov. 20 at 7:30: "La Belle Noiseuse" (1991, Jacques Rivette). . . . Nov. 18 at 6: "The Mother and the Whore" (1974, Jean Eustache). . . . Nov. 20 at 2:30: "JLG by JLG" (1994, Jean-Luc Godard). . . . Nov. 21 at 2:30: "Pickpocket" (1959, Robert Bresson). . . . Nov. 21 at 7:30: "Cleo from 5 to 7" (1962, Agnès Varda).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Nov. 18-22: The 12th New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film and Video Festival. . . . Nov. 23 at 8 and Nov. 24 at 8 and 10: "Cracking Up" (1994, Matt Mitler).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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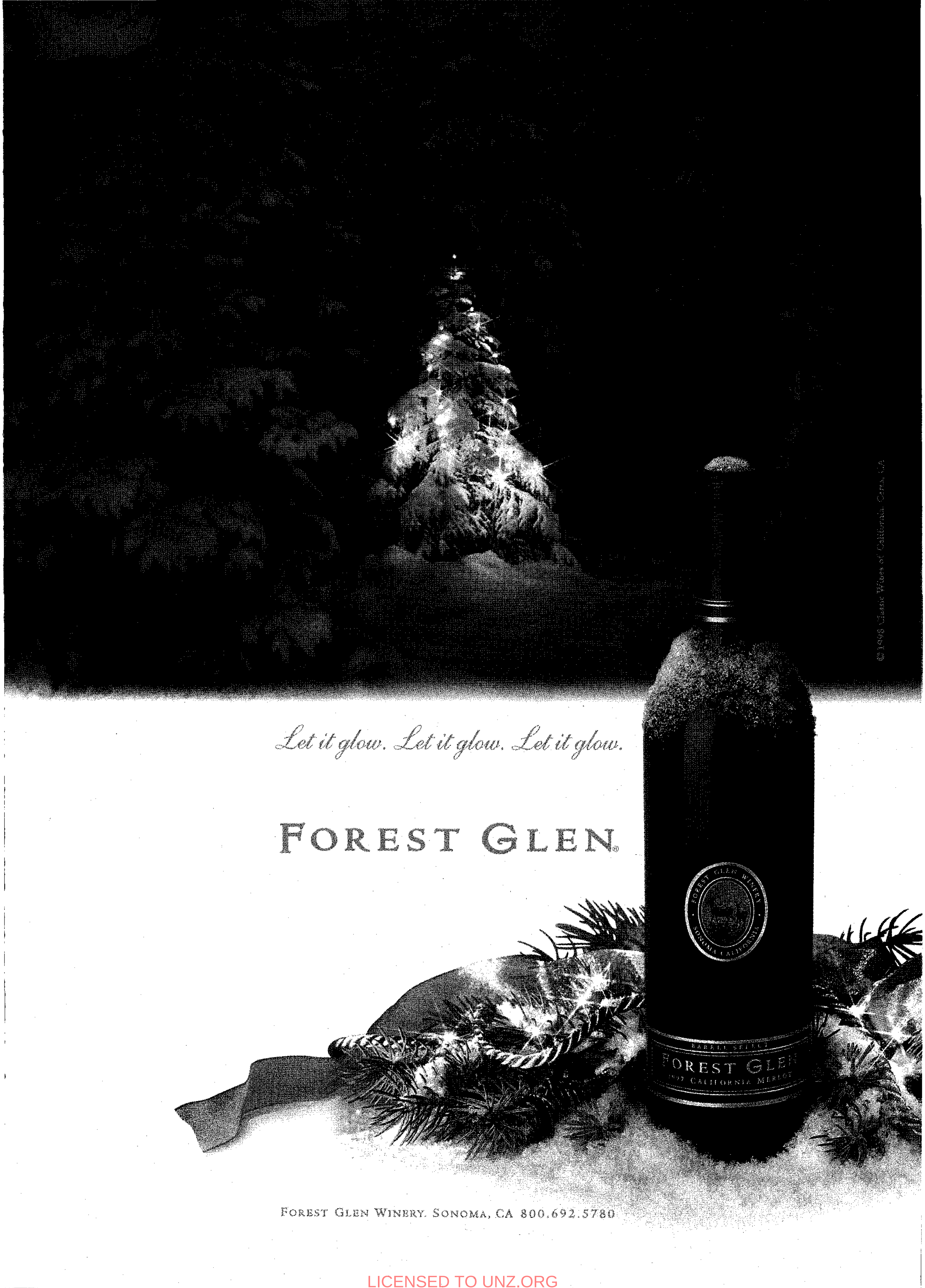
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-623-2770.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY 1, 2, AND 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
UNION SQUARE, Broadway at 13th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.

RON LEACH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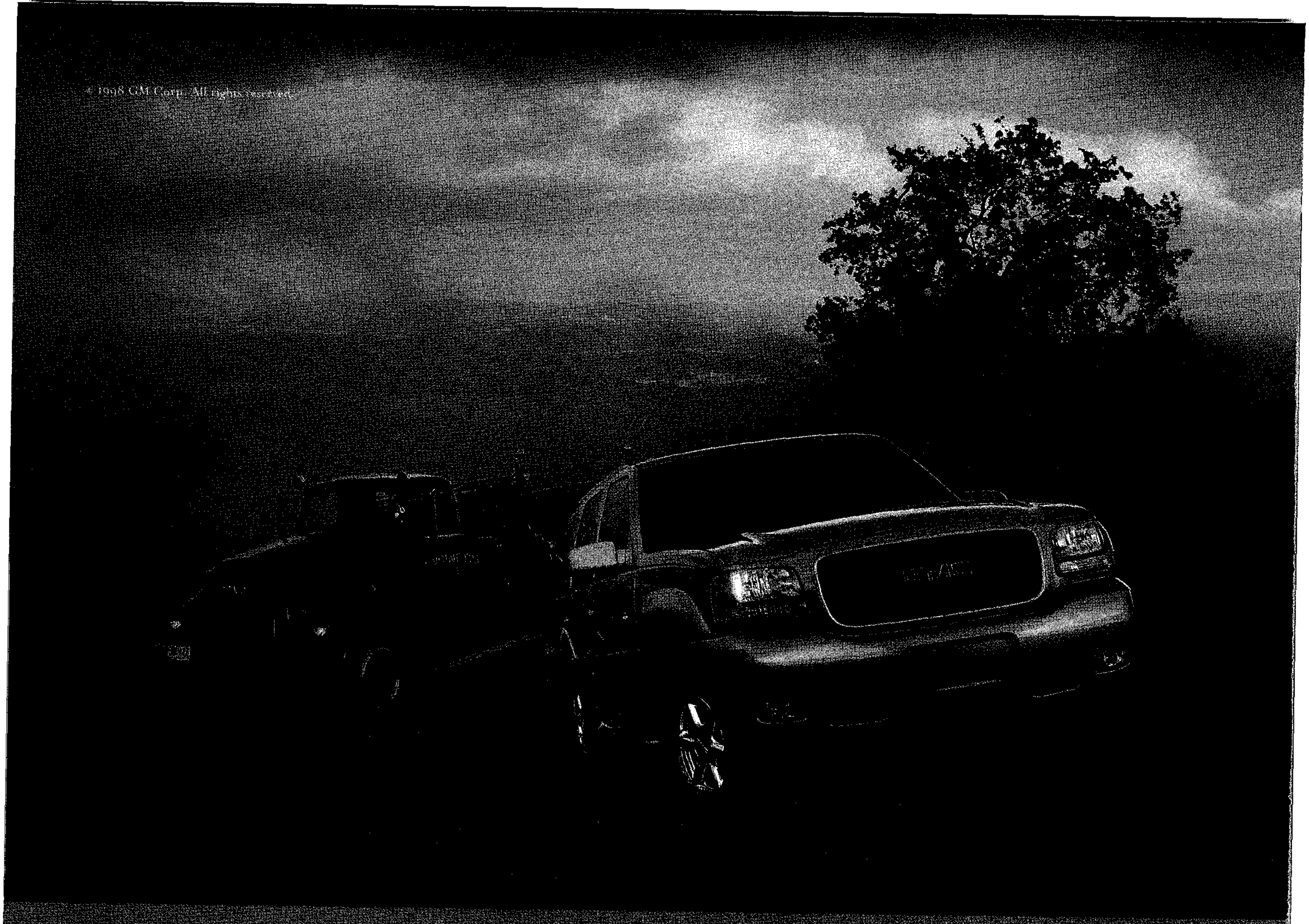

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Has the union label gone Gucci?

IT'S been a long time since people on strike worked for a living when they weren't striking. Back in the days of the log-burning AM radio, even schoolkids would wait to hear exactly which of the Big Three the U.A.W. had decided to take on. The President intervened in battles between men who made steel and men who sold it, and the Teamsters could shut down the country at a nod from Jimmy Hoffa. Even New York newspapers used to go on strike. But things have changed: the vocabulary of American workers' solidarity, which the poor once used against the rich, is now used by the rich against, or anyway among, themselves. The current strike-lockout kerfuffle in the N.B.A. is just the latest occasion on which the Vanderbilts have stolen not merely the clothes off the backs of the Joads but the words out of their mouths. The time-honored *New Masses* language of solidarity and protest is being used to describe a dispute between the filthy rich and the stinking rich. The N.B.A. standoff has an arbitrator, a lockout fund, a threatened boycott, and round-the-clock negotiations—all simulating what the newspapers call a "protracted labor dispute."

What it doesn't have, of course, is a moral issue worthy of the vocabulary. The owners want the players to take home fifty per cent of revenue; the players want sixty per cent. Since the fifty per cent the owners are proposing amounts to $4.5 billion over the next four years, it's hard to believe that Woody Guthrie died for such sins. Of course, the mismatch of blue-collar rhetoric and silk-underwear reality is part of the Big Disconnect of our time, in which the confrontational vocabulary of the century's agonized first half is continually misapplied to its louche and swoony end.

ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT CILLUFFO

We use the old language of conflict in a society of consent. In France, for instance, where language and reality tend to live lives so independent that they might as well be formally divorced, high-school students are on strike right now. And even though this action is supported by the government, the teachers, and the parents, it is still called a strike. An act of protest that has the support of everybody is not really an act of protest, just as a labor dispute between people who will never have to work for a living is not really a labor dispute—it's more of a leisure-time squabble. The N.B.A. lockout is not the first industrial action among the ridiculously well-off. In the past two years, the well-compensated casts of "Friends" and "Seinfeld" also took a page out of Lech Walesa's book: *We're walkin'*. Such actions seldom have popular sentiment on their side. The nerve of these guys, runs the thinking—though it should be said that this line of thought is suspiciously encouraged by those who work for the noted syndicalist Rupert Murdoch.

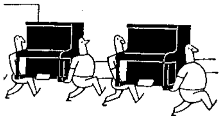
GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL

There's a sad and instructive point to be gleaned from the kidnapping of the old unionism by the new rich, and it is this: the only people left in America with any chance of defying billionaires are millionaires. If Courteney Cox and the rest of the cast of "Friends" call on the tradition of Mother Jones—the right to withhold their labor in exchange for a fair wage—it is not really because Courteney Cox and the cast of "Friends" lack an appreciation of their own good fortune. Everybody else in America knows that the threat to withhold their labor could easily be met by indifference, if not outright joy. The creation of a class of the super-rich, whose wealth knows no limits, has been answered by the creation of a kind of gilded proletariat, whose wealth knows only a few.

Still, the average worker might draw a stimulating lesson from the fat-cat N.B.A. holdouts, since there is no better place to excite the old Marxist suspicion that owners might be dispensable than a basketball arena. However well managed a team may be, a basketball league is still an organization in which the players do all the work and the owners make the money. The myth of management in our time is such that even workers have been snowed into believing that all those square-jawed silver-haired C.E.O.s are actually doing something, rather than just being lucky enough to occupy the corner office in a growing economy. But you'd have to be a pretty recent graduate of the Wharton School to believe that the Chicago Bulls are successful because they are a well-managed firm. The only countervailing power left to a megabusiness is a megastar: Michael Eisner to Michael Jordan. Even Scottie Pippen has only a little bit of power—though come to think of it, wasn't his sitdown protest at the end of a playoff game in 1994 probably the last wildcat strike of all? Solidarity forever, Courteney and Scottie, and don't believe what the bosses tell you. There'll be no pie in the sky—or ancillary marketing revenues—in heaven. —ADAM GOPNIK

BACKSTAGE NOTES

A gilded hand-me-down looks for a new owner.

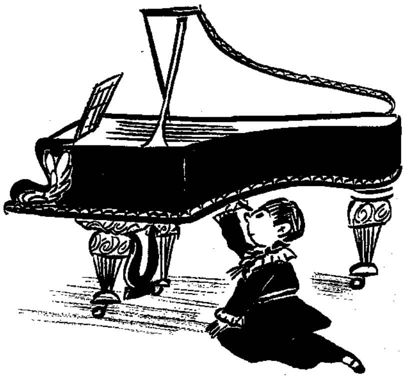


USUALLY, the concert pianist, not the piano, is the main attraction. But on a recent night at Lincoln Center a lavishly gilded instrument that looked as if it hadn't been played since the death of Chopin all but upstaged the entrance of the evening's soloist, Emanuel Ax. When the virtuoso took his seat at the elegant antique—an Empire-style pianoforte, manufactured in London by John Broadwood & Sons in 1840—and stormed into Chopin's Second Piano Concerto, the vapors that often seem to surround the arch-Romantic vanished, and the audience heard what it might have been like when the composer himself was at the keyboard.

"There's something very interesting about playing an instrument that Chopin may have touched," Ax said after the concert. Though the vintage instrument could be described as sounding like a harpsichord on steroids, it doesn't have the muscle of its modern descendant. To make the switch, Ax said, he had to turn on the speed (the thinner soundboard cannot sustain notes as long); take dead aim (the keyboard is narrower); and watch his weight. "It's a little smaller, so I felt a little fatter than usual," the stoutish pianist said. For Ax, the fun ended too fast, and the Broadwood, with a price tag of a hundred thousand dollars, went back to the atelier that had lent it to him, a piano emporium, across the street from Lincoln Center, called Klavierhaus.

Situated on the sixth floor of the Liberty Warehouse Building, Klavierhaus isn't as Old World as the name suggests. In a series of concrete rooms connected by metal doors, the wreckage of many of the finest names in piano-making—from Erard and Pleyel to Bechstein—can be seen in various states of resurrection. The shop was opened in 1993 by Sujatri and Gabor Reisinger, Hungarian brothers whose customers have included not only classical pianists, like Garrick Ohlsson and András Schiff, and the maestro Kurt Masur, but Frank Sinatra and Isaac Mizrahi. Gabor, standing between his "pearls"—the Broadwood and an 1887 wood-inlaid Pleyel that costs a hundred and forty thousand dollars—talked up the English piano. "I could tell it had rarely been played by a professional, because it had not been destroyed," he said.

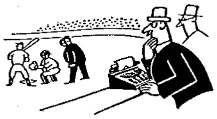
Little more than a piece of decorative furniture in various London drawing rooms for most of the last two centuries, the Broadwood couldn't have looked much better if it had been cryogenically frozen. In 1990, the Reisingers bought the piano at a private auction. Not long afterward, the New York criminal-defense attorney Michael Kennedy took his five-year-old daughter, Anna, piano shopping. "She went straight to it," Kennedy recalled. For the next seven years, the Broadwood, which had to be hoisted into the Empire-style living room of the Kennedys' Upper East Side town house with a crane, "was the reason Anna practiced every day," according to her father. When she was eleven, the Kennedys moved to a loft and traded in the Broadwood for a 1927 Steinway that Cole Porter once kept in his Waldorf-Astoria apartment. "The Broadwood just didn't match the new decor," Kennedy explained.



Over the last six months, the Broadwood, up for sale again, has made a couple of appearances around town. Sujatri points out that the instrument is in perfect "period" shape—as close as possible to what it would have sounded like when Chopin made his triumphant visit to London, in 1848. The piano does feature one distinctly modern touch, however. Anna recently confessed to her parents that, just before her beloved piano was taken away, she crawled underneath its gilded case with a Magic Marker and scribbled her name. —JAY FIELDEN

DEPT. OF COMEBACKS

What one scandal survivor learned in his year out of the limelight.



BY last week, Marv Albert was comfortable in his new job. At 10:25 P.M., the familiar face with the familiar hair weave appeared on the set of the Madison Square Garden Network's "SportsDesk" and prepared to anchor the Thursday-night edition. "I still get butterflies before a show," he said. "But I think that's good. If you lose that anxiety, you've lost your passion."

Albert had just finished his second month on TV since being forced from his posts at NBC Sports and MSG last year, after pleading guilty to some rather flamboyant misdemeanor assault charges. Albert, quoting David Letterman, refers to the epic tabloid episode as his "impeachment." Since then, he has undergone psychiatric counselling, he has married his longtime fiancée, and, having fulfilled the terms of his sentence, he has seen the charges against him dismissed.

"My job was ideal for me," Albert said in his office after the show. "For years, before every game I'd say to myself, 'There's no place I'd rather be.'" His year on the bench, he said, forced him to find other diversions: "I really began to enjoy the games as a fan. Before, I was always on the run, always getting ready for the next game. I never stopped to

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

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A DIARY

By Maggie Estep

THERE had been quiet storms between us for weeks. Now, when I looked at Drew, his face was a mask. He said, "I'm going." I didn't stop him. The words wouldn't come.

I sat in the kitchen for a long time, numb, staring at nothing. It was unusually hot for May. I was sweating; my white shirt clung to me.

That night, I took the train down to Maryland, to the old house. Aunt Teresa had died and the house was to be sold. My brothers had mailed me a set of keys. They'd already gone through the place claiming what they wanted.

I walked from room to room, touching the few remaining pieces of furniture, looking at the once bright wallpaper that now hung down in great strips, like the peeling skin of some frayed psychedelic beast.

I climbed up to the attic. It was very hot and close, and clouds of dust rose with each step I took. Off in a corner, under a tiny octagonal window, was a trunk. I kneeled down and slowly opened it. Inside were a great many dresses from the nineteen-twenties, festive beaded things in faded blues and reds. Beneath these, I found a magician's wand and a black top hat, vestiges of my Great Aunt Kate, an Irish magician's assistant I'd been named after. Kate had died young after a tumultuous life that included a reputed affair with Houdini. And here before me was that which remained.

At the very bottom of the trunk was a decorated purse. Opening it, I found a soft brown leather diary with the legend "Spell" embossed on its front in blood-red ink. I ran my fingers over the worn leather cover, then looked inside. The pages were yellowed and, for the most part, blank until I came to the middle of the book. There, handwritten in red, were the words of a spell.

To Bring Love
Run naked through a green field at dawn.
Kneel in the sea and whisper.
Kiss a masterpiece.
Ride on the back of a white horse at midnight.

I closed the diary, then put the dresses back in the trunk. I walked down from the attic and stood at the bedroom window. Across the road was a field with horizon at its edges. I sat down in Aunt Teresa's rocking chair with the diary in my lap. When dawn showed at the window, I went out and crossed the road to the field.

The sun was coming up, a sad orange globe, its burnt edges warming the grass that reached to my knees. I slowly unbuttoned my shirt. A car passed on the road ahead. I took off my skirt and laid it down in the wet grass. I kicked off my shoes and started running. The cool morning air kissed my skin. Another car drove by. I don't know if its driver saw me. I ran from one end of the field to the other.

Later that morning, I took the train home. The apartment was empty of Drew. In my absence, all traces of him had been removed. The cat greeted me loudly. I fed her, packed a few clothes and Kate's diary, then went to Penn Station where I caught a train to the Jersey shore. As the industrial wastelands unfolded outside the train windows, I ran my fingers over the diary's cover again.

It was May and the Atlantic was merciless.

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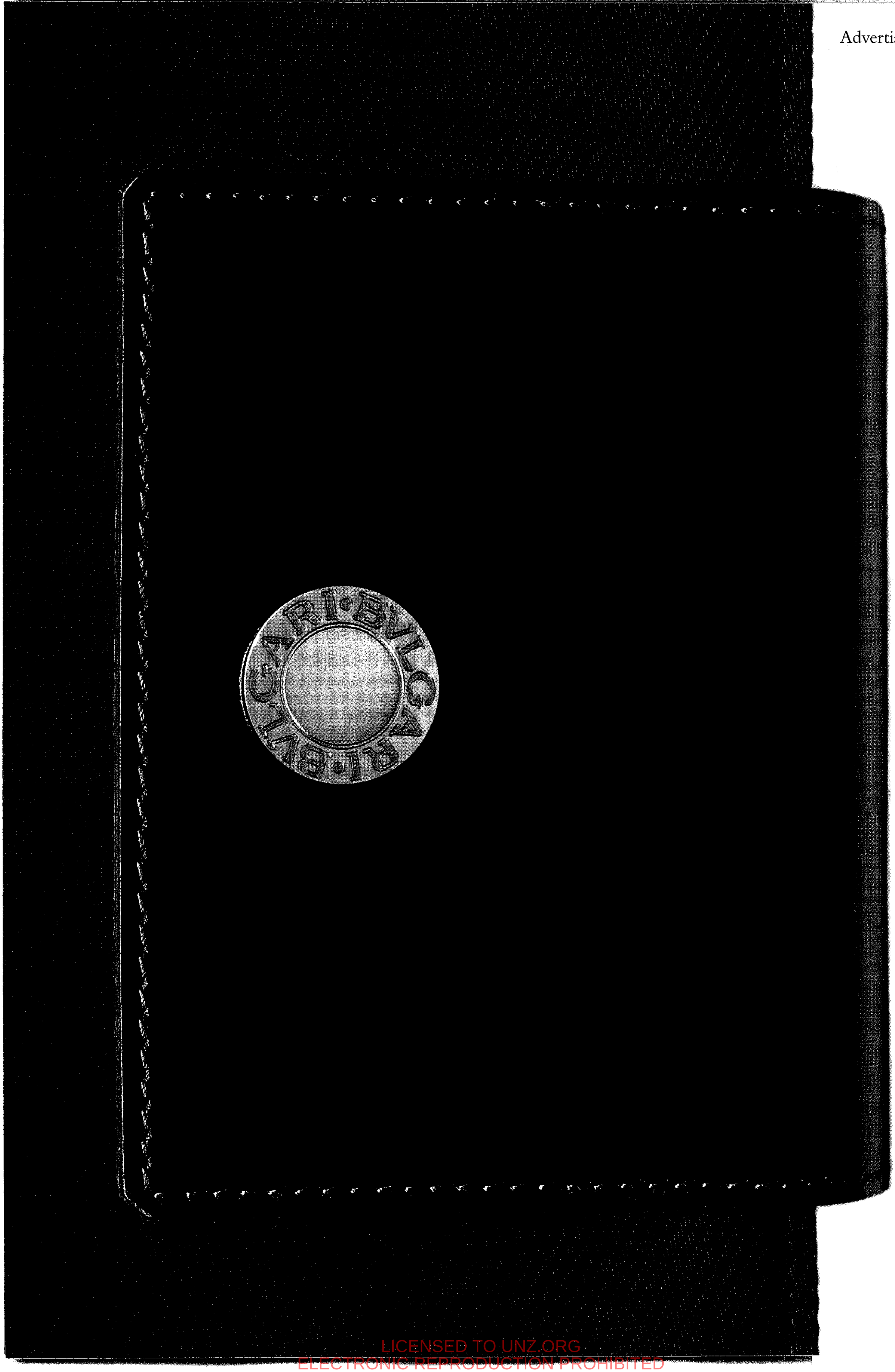
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A storm was probably coming; the waves were crested and angry. I waded in to my waist, shivering, the ocean like liquid ice on my skin. I knelt. Bringing my lips to the waves, I whispered at the water. I told it all the things that had happened between Drew and me—the misunderstandings, the slights and indignities of two humans trying to come together.

When I went back to my little motel room, I picked up the diary once more. I searched its yellowed pages for further clues but there was nothing, just the four dictates of the spell.

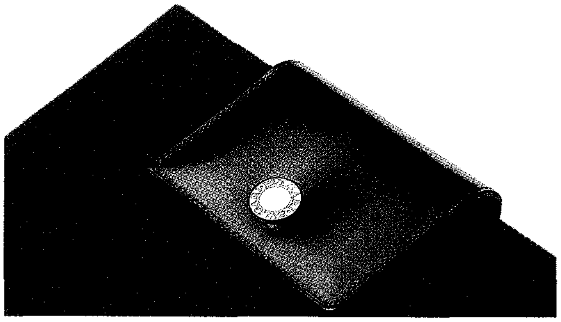
That Friday, I went to the museum. I found my way to the room where the three Caravaggios hang. I stood before "The Denial of St. Peter." His dark eyes were haunted and his hands were strangely folded in, pointing towards his heart. I looked over at the security guard and then, very slowly, reached for the painting, expecting to invoke a blare of alarms or a shower of tear gas. I touched St. Peter's fingers with mine. In the silence, I leaned over and kissed him on the mouth.

Later, I wondered if I'd left lipstick traces on the painting.

I went home and sat with the diary in my lap. I looked at my lone photo of Kate—mysterious snakes of black hair hanging over each shoulder, almond-shaped eyes and a thin, inquisitive mouth.

I'd bought some mink oil that I now rubbed into the diary's cover, rejuvenating it, restoring the strong smell of leather.

The next night, I headed off to Brooklyn. Drew had known a man named Jack who kept a horse at a stable near Prospect Park. We'd gone to the stable a few times, rented horses, and ridden through the park. Jack was a quiet man. He rode a white horse without a saddle, and was in such communication with the animal that his magnificent strong hands seemed to barely touch the reins.



Although it was nearly midnight, I staked the stable out for quite a while to make certain no one was there. The door was locked but not convincingly. I fidgeted with the lock. It sprang loose in my fingers.

Turning on my flashlight I went into the barn. I found Jack's horse. There was a bridle hanging outside his stall and, after hunting around a bit, I found saddles in a little room. I tacked up the horse and led him out of the barn. I mounted, and pointed him towards the park.

There was a crescent moon hanging low through the trees. It was a warm night. I asked the horse for a canter. Wind swept through my hair. After a while, patches of sweat showed on the horse's neck. I brought him back to a walk.

As we rounded the corner to the little lake, I pulled Kate's diary from my pocket. I could smell the leather, so much softer now that I'd rubbed mink oil into it.

Suddenly, a group of kids sprang from the shadows and ran up behind my horse, shouting and waving their arms. The horse reared. I remember falling for a long time.

When I came to, I was stretched out on the floor of the barn's tack room. I looked up and saw two paramedics. Next to them stood Jack.

"If you want to borrow my horse, just ask," he said.

I smiled at him. I reached into my pocket. Kate's diary was gone. *© Maggie Estep, 1998*

Maggie Estep's second novel, "Soft Maniacs," *will be published in 1999. Her first novel,* "Diary of An Emotional Idiot," *was published to great critical acclaim in 1997 by Harmony Books. She has also released two albums of spoken word.*

Please join us when Estep reads from and signs copies of her favorite works on November 19, 1998 from 6 P.M. to 8 P.M. This is just one of a series of events of Beauty & Passion to be held at Café Bvlgari at 730 Fifth Avenue (57th Street), New York City. For a limited number of reservations, please call 800.BVLGARI, ext. 3.

Cover page: Mini diary in amber leather with gold coated turn-lock. Pocket diary in amber leather. Both $240 each.
Left and this page: Ring binder organizer in black leather and nylon twill with palladium coated turn-lock. $400.

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enjoy time with my family. Now I do. I'd always hated dogs—now I have two of them. I'd never taken walks in Central Park, and this past year I discovered that walking in the Park is fun."

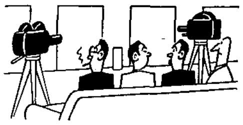
"SportsDesk," a half-hour news show with an emphasis on New York sports, is transmitted by MSG to the tristate area. To prepare for his role as the show's week-night anchor, Albert reads sports sections from six newspapers each day. "It's almost a sickness," he said. Having become familiar with the Internet during his time off, he also pokes around in cyberspace for more sports to read. He writes his own copy. MSG's ratings for "SportsDesk" have risen by twenty-one per cent since he came on board.

Marv Albert

"There are times now when I'll be watching a major event, like the N.B.A. finals, on television and I miss being there," Albert admitted. "But I don't view 'SportsDesk' as a step backward. I tell myself that things are working out well. I'm thankful to have my life back again. I'm making my comeback one step at a time." —THOMAS HAUSER

THE PICTURES

One man's brush with celebrity in Woody Allen's "Celebrity."



I HAVE always subscribed to Woody Allen's observation that eighty per cent of success is showing up. Guided by this insight, I have consistently shown up at my office and have been lucky enough to walk to it for the last thirty-five years. On these walks, as a typical-looking Upper East Side New Yorker—slightly portly, lots of gray hair, double-breasted pin-striped suit, blue striped shirt with white collar and bow tie, and, more often than not, an umbrella—I have never attracted any unusual attention.

This record was dramatically changed last fall, when, as I was walking past the Stanhope Hotel, I noticed a crowd of people on the sidewalk. I slowed down to get a better look, and suddenly a young woman carrying a clipboard approached me and asked if I would like to be in a Woody Allen movie. "Why me?" I asked.

"We are looking for nice gentlemen," she said.

"How do you know whether I am nice or a gentleman?" I asked.

"It doesn't matter—all you have to do is look like one" was the answer.

We exchanged cards. I wanted to call her the moment I walked into my office, but I decided to play it cool and wait twenty minutes. When I reached her, I was told to come in the next day in my most sophisticated clothes for a fitting—and that the following week I would be expected to be at the Jean Georges restaurant from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. for two days.

At the fitting, my outfit was immediately dismissed as inappropriate, and I was issued a different suit, shirt, and tie. Then, the evening before my big scene, I was notified that because the star, Judy Davis, had become ill the shoot was cancelled. I concluded that I was a has-been before ever having been.

Three weeks later, I received a message that the "Celebrity" shoot had been rescheduled at Jean Georges for 7 A.M. the following Sunday and Monday. A prior commitment prohibited my appearing on Sunday, but I told the casting director that I would be happy to be available on Monday. My suggestion was appropriately ridiculed, but I was offered a better part, one with speaking lines, for an art-gallery scene, to be shot the following Wednesday. I checked my calendar and discovered that I had a meeting in Chicago that day. Undeterred, the casting director offered me still another role, for Thursday, if I showed up at 12:30 P.M. at a bar on the Bowery.

As instructed, I showed up at a place called the B Bar and waited for an hour or so with a slim, dreadful-looking bunch, until I heard our group being described as exterior persons who needed to be fitted for coats. I asked a tall, sad-faced young man who seemed to be in charge what an exterior person was. With a cold look, he announced that I was not an exterior person—but that I was just right for the art-gallery scene that was supposed to have been shot the day before and had been rescheduled for Friday.

So on Friday evening I arrived at a crowded gallery on West Broadway. I sat down and asked the man next to me how long he had spent in this room the previous Wednesday night. He answered that he and the others had waited six hours before being told that the shoot was cancelled.

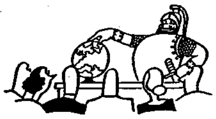
Mildly alarmed, I then asked my friend if we extras ever got any lines to speak. He looked at me incredulously and said, "Of course not."

I made three decisions: one, to put on my coat and tiptoe the hell out of there; two, to abandon all hope of becoming a celebrity; and, three, to keep in mind that to succeed it's just as important to know about the last twenty per cent as it is to know about the first eighty per cent.

—CLIVE CHAJET

BRAVE NEW WORLD DEPT.

Ted Turner in 2000? The media mogul converts some rich people.



ONE recent Friday night, Ted Turner warned three hundred or so wealthy Southern Californians that the end is near. He was in Santa Barbara with his wife, Jane Fonda, to pick up the World Citizenship Award from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, an organization dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Diandra Douglas and the real-estate tycoon Ken Slaught hosted the black-tie dinner at their Montecito estate, which is still known as the Huffington house by locals who are unable to shake the memory of its previous tenants, Arianna and Michael Huffington. The Turners, who are both sixty this year, made a point of being sociable. "We just came from the marriage counsellor in Santa Monica," Turner announced to his startled dinner companions. "Jane wants me to become a saint—but I'm not."

Fonda seemed particularly pleased to see her old friend the nineteen-fifties movie star Tab Hunter, whom she brought over to meet Turner. "'Damn

Yankees' is my favorite movie! That's why I bought the Braves," Turner hollered, letting loose with an improvised Broadway medley. A few minutes earlier, he had serenaded another guest with the theme from "Camelot," which was also his "favorite movie."

Turner's clearly ad-libbed after-dinner speech, about humanity's self-destructiveness, was an irresistible synthesis of Southern populism, standup-comedy shtick, and talk-radio outrage. "I don't know how many of you have seen 'Road Warrior.' It's a Warner Brothers movie," he said, unable to resist a plug. "It's about these real brutish guys . . . and they're out in the desert driving around, fighting over the last few gallons of gasoline. . . . You go back to gangs. It's like L.A."

He then offered some Darwinian consolation: "It's not really all our fault, 'cause really all we are is monkeys without tails." Looking skyward, he added, "Father, I hate to tell you that."

Turner blamed the government for the nuclear nightmare and offered up a curious theory: "The United States is the one that doesn't want to get rid of nuclear weapons . . . because somehow they think that we're going to be able to use nuclear weapons to save ourselves from the starving masses of the Third World when they come to our doorstep." Returning to the "Road Warrior" theme, he warned, "But that's not the way they are going to come in. They're coming from across the Mexican border right now. . . . They'll come from Saudi Arabia when they run out of oil over there. . . . The real threat is no longer an army marching on us, it's people infiltrating us, you know, that are starving. And what are you going to do? Shoot 'em?"

Turner concluded his doomsday remarks with a splash of optimism. "There were some good things that happened in this election. The Christian right didn't roll us," he said, grinning triumphantly. "They didn't roll us!" He added, "I like almost everybody—except Rupert Murdoch and fundamentalists."

The normally sedate audience jumped to their feet to applaud him. Following the speech, Turner huddled with several foundation members and let slip some big news. "I am very serious about running for President," he told them, "but Jane doesn't want me to do it." However, as the hosts said good night to Fonda and thanked her for coming, Mrs. Ted Turner shrugged and said politely, "Wherever Ted goes, I go."

—ANN LOUISE BARDACH

INK

J. D. Salinger has met his institutional doppelgänger.

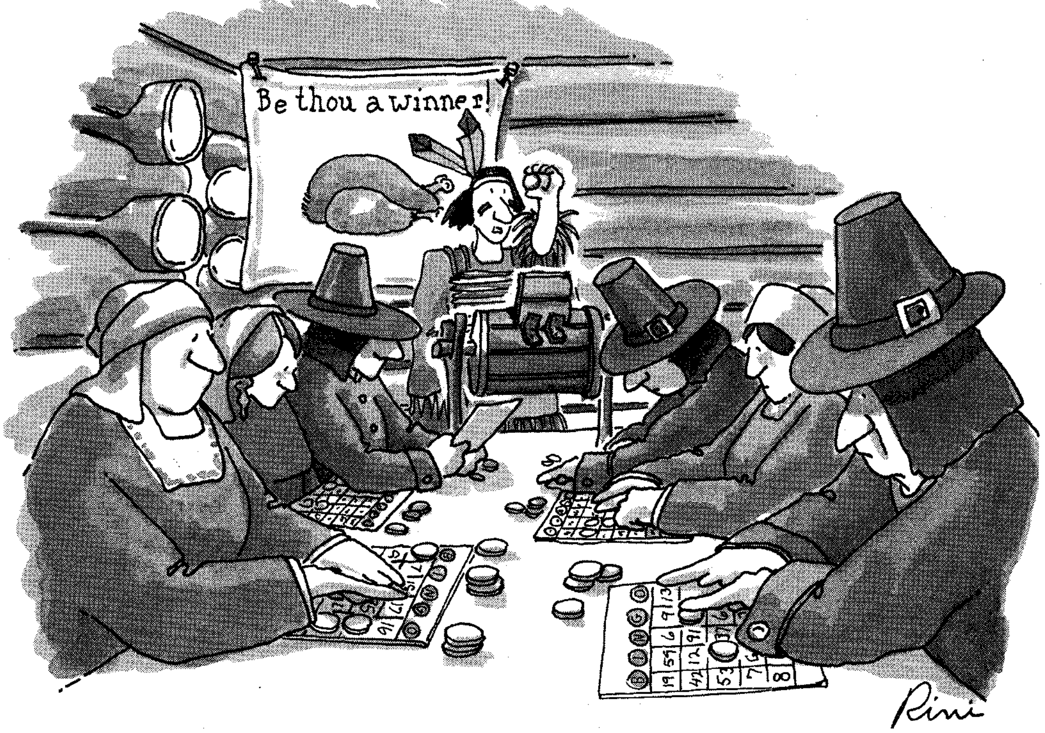
SOMEWHERE in America there's a publisher as shrouded in mystery—and as devoted to the work of J. D. Salinger—as Salinger himself. Train Bridge Recluse, as the outfit calls itself, has published maddeningly tiny amounts of material while proving extremely difficult to reach. And now the self-proclaimed "anarchist publishing collective" has stolen a page from Joyce Maynard, not to mention several from Salinger, by violating Salinger's own carefully guarded privacy.

Train Bridge Recluse's most recent offering is a book called "Twenty-two Stories," a collection of Salinger's short fiction that originally appeared in magazines, including this one. But Salinger never published any of the stories in book form, and these "missing stories," two of which star Holden Caulfield, have been so coveted that it is difficult to find them even in the periodical rooms of public libraries: often, the pages have been torn right out of the magazines.

"Twenty-two Stories" has itself remained elusive. "I have a friend who saw a copy at a yard sale," Stephen Foskett, who runs a Salinger Web site called Bananafish, says. "But I've never seen it." Neither have clerks at eight alternative bookstores in Manhattan.

And yet, not long ago, several copies turned up in Portland, Oregon, amid the zines and self-published poetry at a little store called Reading Frenzy. "Twenty-two Stories" was not on display, but if you asked for it, and handed over ten dollars, the clerk would fish it out of a box behind the counter. The book is paperback and perfect-bound, with a text-free blue cover and lots of typos.

"I'm not going to answer any questions about the publisher," Chloe Eudaly, the owner of Reading Frenzy, said, cautiously. She did agree, though, to act as a


Be thou a winner!

"G-27, G-27!"

go-between. A few days later, Eudaly produced a cryptic two-page fax from the publishing collective, which opened with a warning: "Because of the illegal subject matter, some facts must remain secret and some actions anonymous." The letter said only that the collective was "composed of a small group of young people based on the East Coast," and explained that the "Twenty-two Stories" edition of a thousand copies was distributed "on a personal level." It also plugged Train Bridge's backlist, which includes an Italian-to-English translation of a work called "Armed Joy" and histories of the Weather Underground and the Black Panthers.

"Twenty-two Stories" is obviously a copyright ripoff, and it's not the first one to be perpetrated on Salinger. In 1974, John Greenberg, of Berkeley, California, sold twenty-five thousand copies of "The Complete Uncollected Short Stories of J. D. Salinger," Volumes I and II, to bookstores across America. The F.B.I. made a splashy but fruitless stab at finding Greenberg, who turned out to be a whole contingent of untraceable hippies. Some of the books ended up in the hands of antiquarian book dealers, where they have fetched up to seven hundred and fifty dollars for the two-volume set.

Train Bridge Recluse's letter ends by apologizing to Salinger, and offers this excuse: "We decided our motivations for re-publishing . . . the stories outweighed Salinger's motivation for not."

That rhetoric is, of course, about as likely to mollify Salinger as an autographed copy of Joyce Maynard's memoir. If history is any guide, it might even enrage him enough to break his silence. The appearance of John Greenberg's edition led Salinger to talk to a *Times* reporter. "It's irritating," he said. "I'm very upset."

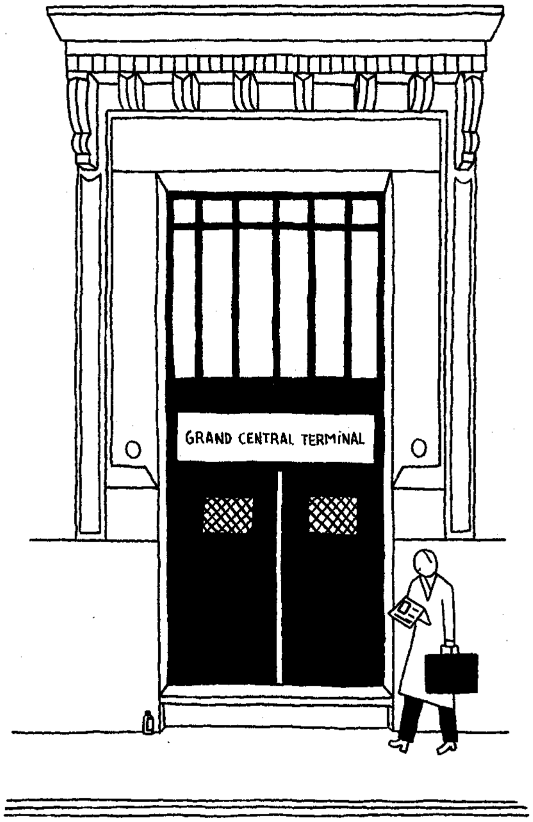
—Bill Donahue

POSTCARD FROM WELLFLEET

Notes on fall in a summer place.

6 A.M.: Turned up furnace, rummaged for coat, drove to beach. Atlantic Ocean majestic, vast, with slow-rolling waves. Iberian Peninsula obviously more than stone's throw away. Thoreau, writing about approximately the same spot some hundred and fifty years ago, had it right: "A man may stand there and put all America behind him." Beach deserted except for lone man in beach chair, working puzzle. "I'll be damned," he says to me. "Bet you didn't know that 'Chichevache' is a medieval monster fond of eating patient wives." Thanked the man and headed for town.

Breakfast: Lovely New England town (pop. 3,234), still basically asleep. Pharmacy still closed, grocery still closed, town offices still closed, vegetable stand (dreadful year for tomatoes) closed for season. Newspaper store open. Take one look at headlines and flee. Life too short. Down to Uncle Frank's, local hangout on bay side, near fishing boats. Culinary item: Uncle Frank's mysteriously becomes Scallywags at 11:45 A.M., with extensive menu for dining in and taking out. From somewhere hear reedy recording of Memphis Slim. Observe crowded counter and tables. Spot bearded man in saffron turban tearing into croissant, small boy in pink pajamas doing ditto. Cultural war? Bagels vs. croissants? Wonder how transcendentalists would handle this. None of my business, so have second cup of coffee.



Leisurely Stroll: Down Main Street. No traffic worth mentioning. (Town rubbing eyes, stretching limbs.) Into drugstore for Kleenex. Ragweed rampant and schnozzola rebellious. Into grocery. Had been given chore: Buy garbage bags! Shades of Thorstein Veblen and his theory of conspicuous consumption. What to buy? Tall, medium, lawn, leaf, freezer? Sandwich, small, trash? Hopeless. Settle for punitive bottle of salsa, halfway between Heartburn and Instant Death. Continue down street. Pass Our Lady of Lourdes, and think how delighted Walker Evans would have been to photograph this simple wooden church, with elaborately carved doors picturing painted saints.

Public Library: Blessedly open, already crowded.

Haircut: No barber in Wellfleet, so I drive down pike (ten-fifteen minutes) to North Eastham. "Mornin'," says the barber. "You've got a mop there, buddy." I tell him to go full speed ahead, spare no expense. "I close Saturday, Sunday, and Monday," he says. "Go fishing. Up to Provincetown for mostly blues, flounder, cod." I tell him I've been reading that many of these areas are fished out. "Don't know what you're talking about," he says. "I fish and they bite." (Fish stories an American staple.) Two more customers, a man and a woman, arrive, take seats, and wait. "Poor Samuel," says the man to the barber. "Fine, decent man. Left instructions to scatter his ashes, but neglected to say if he meant over ocean or bay." "They'll figure it out," says the woman. "Give them time. They're grieving."

Long Walk in Woods: Cape light exquisite. Late afternoon now. Along sand road of Old Kings Highway until I reach pink granite marker with bronze plate reading "HERE WAS BUILT THE FIRST SCHOOLHOUSE WELLFLEET." Local historian forgot to mention date, but no matter. History all around, bygone schoolboys and girls all around, deafening silence of the woods all around. I walk for miles, with full heart, knowing time has come to head back to Fun City. But determined to demolish last pound-and-a-half lobster of season at supper. Not a small comfort. —Philip Hamburger

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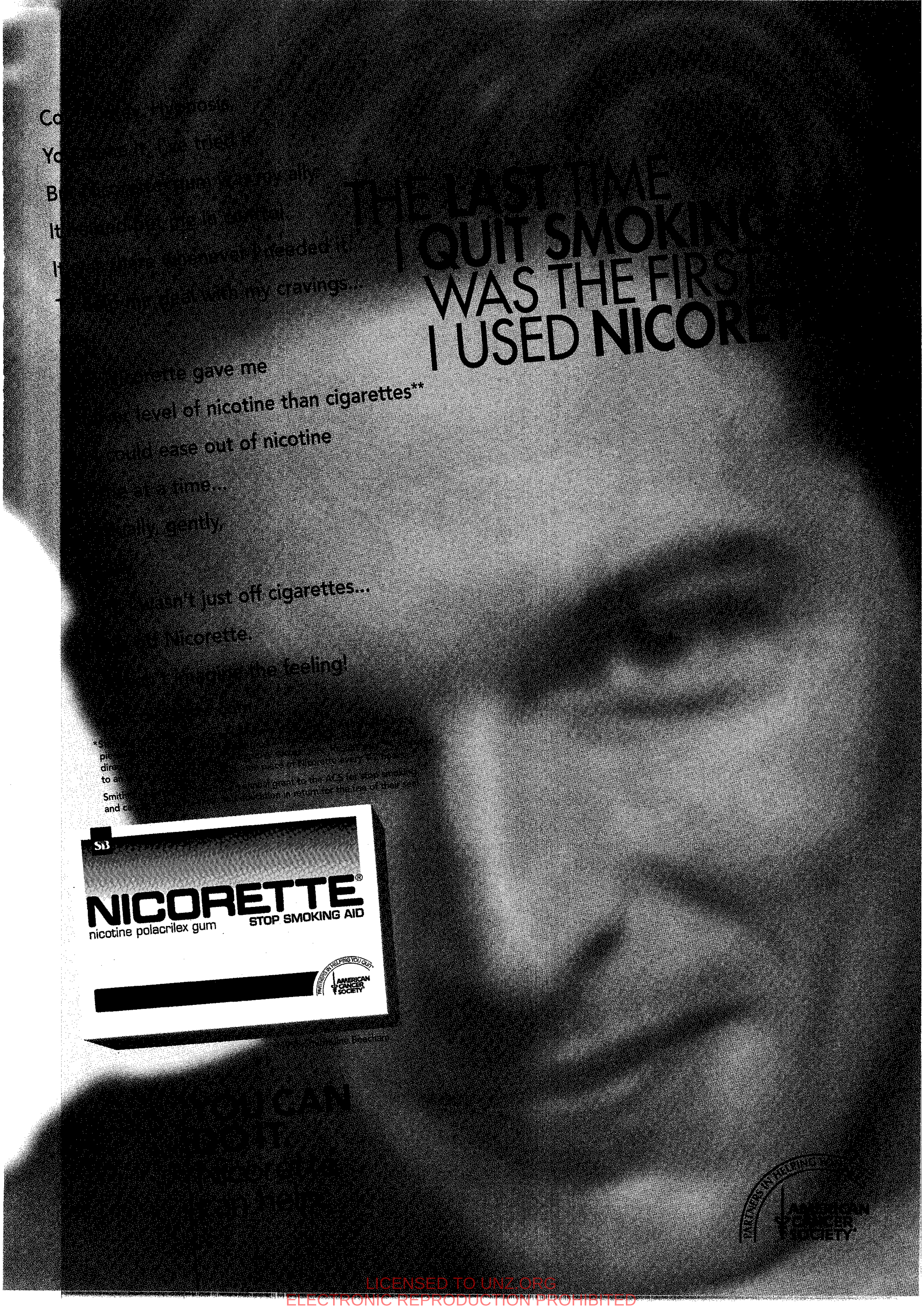

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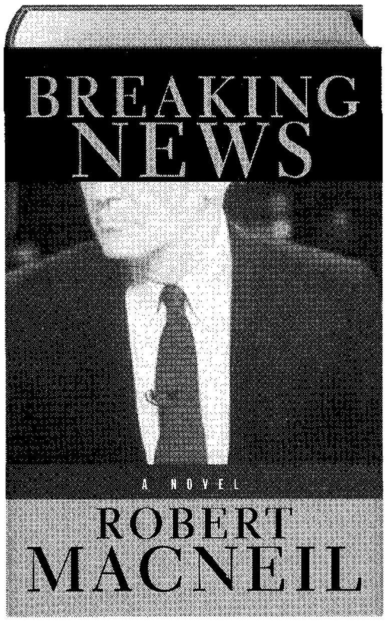

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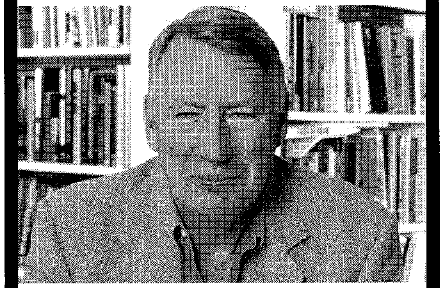

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ANNALS OF HOLLYWOOD

CHEESE WHIZ

Sam Raimi, the auteur of the “Evil Dead” series, gets a chance to sit at the grown-up table.

BY REBECCA MEAD

Raimi surrounded by stills from his movies: “He’s like the kid in school who wouldn’t get into trouble himself, but would get you into trouble,” the writer Scott Smith says.

STEVEN DANA

LAST month, something unusual happened on the *Billboard* video-sales charts. First and second place were taken, predictably enough, by the insuperable “Titanic,” and Disney’s audiovisual pacifier “Lady and the Tramp.” But close behind them, climbing as high as third place one week, to outrank even video-store sure things like “Austin Powers” and “Playboy’s Freshman Class,” was a movie called “The Evil Dead”—a cheese-and-ketchup horror flick from 1979 with an absurd plot, bad acting, and all the production values a mere three hundred and fifty thousand dollars can buy (not many).

Though less well known than other splatter movies of the same era, “The Evil Dead,” which is about a group of college students trapped in a cabin who are turned one by one into zombies by an unseen monster, is a genre cult classic. When I bought a copy at my local video store and asked the dyed-and-pierced youth behind the counter whether it was good, he gave me a withering look and replied, “It’s the best movie ever made.” The energetic sales of “The Evil Dead” and its sequel, “Evil Dead II—Dead by Dawn,” which was re-released last summer, coincide with a horror renaissance. Wes Craven’s 1996 movie “Scream” and last year’s “Scream 2” both grossed more than a hundred million dollars, and this summer’s “Halloween: H20,” in which Jamie Lee Curtis reprised her role from 1978’s “Halloween,” was a critical and commercial success.

“The Evil Dead” movies appeal not only to teens who like to scare themselves witless; they are also celebrated by a certain kind of cineaste. Film buffs note the wildly unconventional camera moves, racing along almost at ground level to convey the viewpoint of an onrushing monster. (Fellini is said to have been an admirer of “The Evil Dead.”) Comedy fans praise the two “Evil Dead” sequels (the third is called “Army of Darkness”) for their raw slapstick humor: in “Evil Dead II,” the star, Bruce Campbell, chainsaws off his own hand because it has been colonized by an evil spirit, then straps the saw to his stump to become a kind of avenging proto-cyborg. (Jay Douglas, of Anchor Bay Entertainment, which has re-released the videos, compares Campbell to Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin.) Moreover, connoisseurs of schlock find in the "Evil Dead" movies the kind of ham acting, crude special effects, and cartoonish poor taste that distinguish this American genre. The contemporary analogues of "The Evil Dead" are not just today's horror films but gross-outs like "South Park" and cheesy, so-bad-they're-good reruns on "Nick at Nite."

Sam Raimi, who directed "The Evil Dead" when he was just twenty years old, is a master of cheese, which might be defined as an offness of taste and mood, akin to camp but without camp's knowing distance. Since making the "Evil Dead" series, Raimi has gone on to direct several studio movies with grown-up budgets. In 1990, he made "Darkman," a comic-book superhero melodrama starring Liam Neeson, which spawned two straight-to-video sequels that Raimi produced but didn't direct. (The straight-to-video sequel is categorically cheesy.) In 1995, he made a Western, "The Quick and the Dead," which was half homage, half spoof, and was noteworthy for being the first major motion picture in which Leonardo DiCaprio died tragically and Sharon Stone kept her clothes on. Then Raimi helped create the goofy Ancient Greece–meets–Santa Monica television series "Hercules" and its crypto-Sapphic spinoff, "Xena: Warrior Princess," which for three seasons has been the most successful first-run syndicated drama on television, considerably enriching Raimi and his partner, Rob Tapert.

For almost two decades, Raimi has fulfilled a cultural role comparable to the bit part he played in Joel and Ethan Coen's 1994 movie "The Hudsucker Proxy," where he was an adman trying to come up with a name for a new toy (the Hoopsucker? the Hudswinger?) that is eventually called the hula hoop. Raimi has dedicated his imaginative powers to the invention of simple, diverting pleasures, and has done so with engaged enthusiasm, rather than with the cool, aloof stylishness of his friends, the Coen brothers. The Coens, who have known Raimi since Joel was an assistant editor on "The Evil Dead," are teasingly fond of him. In their office they have a framed still of him getting blown away in his role as the "snickering gunman" in "Miller's Crossing," and when they talk about him they sound the way Beavis and Butt-head would if they had doctorates in cinema studies and watched the Independent Film Channel instead of MTV.

Joel: "Each successive 'Evil Dead' becomes purer and purer, more like esoteric art films. Getting closer and closer to, like, Tarkovsky."

Ethan: "Sam was going to do an 'Evil Dead' which just consisted of Bruce alone in a cabin. One actor; one set. Very arty. It would have been a really good movie: you know, the inner and the outer. Just Bruce, man. A contemplation of Bruce."

Joel: "Just Bruce."

Ethan: "And Sam wrote this really great script about the demolition derby, the romance of the demolition derby."

Joel: "He wrote it a long time ago, and we have been trying to convince him to do it ever since. I think he thinks it's silly."

Ethan: "He should do more art movies, like the 'Evil Dead's and the demolition derby. Sam, you know, he's misunderstood. Even by himself."

I MET Sam Raimi for lunch recently to talk about his new movie, a thriller called "A Simple Plan," which opens next month. Lunch was at midnight, and we ate in a church, but the site and the hour were not due to the nocturnal demands of horror. Raimi had been shooting night scenes in the bar of the Waldorf-Astoria as part of "For Love of the Game," a project that sounds entirely wholesome, starring Kevin Costner as a baseball hero.

Raimi seemed wholesome, too, with the combined mischievousness and earnestness of a twelve-year-old. He had a courtly, understated manner, addressing his bit-part actors respectfully as "sir," and thanking extras for their work. ("Sam's very polite," Joel Coen told me. "He has always helped little old ladies across the street. That has always been a part of Sam, along with the evisceration and dismemberment.") You would call him baby-faced if it were possible for a baby to have a day's growth of gray-flecked stubble. He wore a sports coat, as he usually does on

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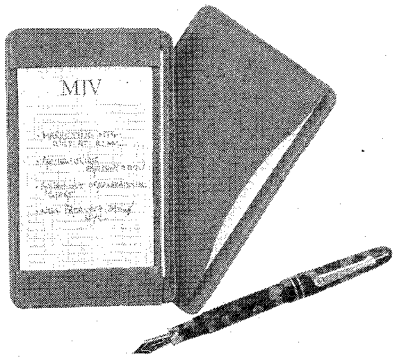

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Portering ice picks and painkiller for the Europeans
Who have moved mountains to come to this, their last ashram by gaslight.

—AIDAN MATHEWS

set, as a sign of respect for his team; but he wore it over a rumpled pair of blue chinos and a pair of scuffed, clompy brown leather shoes.

In conversation, Raimi had a habit of smoothing his hair down on his forehead into choppy bangs, and he was attentive, and given to an occasional half-giggle when something amused him. Friends say he used to perform a party trick in which he would open a beer bottle with his eye socket. Scott Smith, the author and screenwriter of "A Simple Plan," described some more recent practical jokery: "Sam would introduce me to a producer from Paramount by saying, 'This is Scott Smith's assistant,' to see if this person would treat me differently, not knowing who I was," Smith says. "He's like the kid in school who wouldn't get into trouble himself but would get *you* into trouble."

"A Simple Plan" is the story of two brothers who find millions of dollars inside the wreckage of a crashed airplane and scheme to keep the money, a decision that leads inexorably to brutality, betrayal, and death. The film marks Raimi's return to the movie business after a few years out. The hiatus was due, in part, to Raimi's decision to spend more time with his two small children—Lorne, a boy of four and a half, and Henry, who is almost two. (Raimi's wife, Gillian, the daughter of the television cowboy Lorne Greene, is expecting the couple's first girl in January.) "I stopped shooting pictures, and I started getting into television, where you can drive to work every day and be back for dinner," Raimi explained. His chief project was producing a horror series for CBS Television, called "American Gothic," about a small South Carolina town where the sheriff is actually the Devil; it died during its first season.

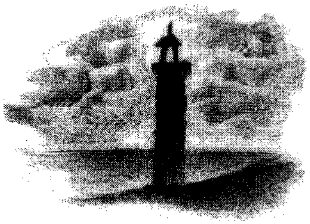
But Raimi's absence from the movie industry was also a function of his reputation as a genre director: he had a hard time being seen as anything else. There was a moment in the late eighties when studio executives apparently regarded Sam Raimi as the next Tim Burton, but it failed to pan out. (Raimi was at one time attached to "Jack Frost," a movie opening this Christmas about a child whose dead father comes back as Frosty the Snowman, but another director ended up making the film.) Even "A Simple Plan" is Raimi's by default. The novel was optioned by Mike Nichols, bounced to Ben Stiller, and finally landed with Scott Rudin, whom Raimi petitioned for the position of director. "Scott Rudin told me, 'You know, I want to work with you, but truthfully, there are a lot of other directors that I think are more right for this project, and you are, like, number fifteen down on the list,'" Raimi said. Finally, when John Boorman had to abandon the project after casting the two leads and scouting locations, Raimi was brought in.

Though Raimi has always had devotees, his movies have never been quite good enough. His longtime partner Rob Tapert says, "I think 'A Simple Plan' is the first time Sam has shown his potential. I have always felt that he is a better director and filmmaker than the reception that the movies have received would suggest."

"A Simple Plan" is Raimi's first effort to make an altogether mainstream movie, albeit it an offbeat one. The influence of the Coens' "Fargo" flavors the film: like it, "A Simple Plan" is set in a snowy Midwestern town where unexpected violence lurks. But the film is less ironic than "Fargo," more heartfelt. To an eye accustomed to Raimi's signature cartoon violence and oversized characters, "A Simple Plan" is the picture of restraint. Bruce Campbell says, "You watch 'A Simple Plan' the way you watch a normal movie. Sam has a certain visual style, where the camera is always racing around and twisting up and down. But here he just shot it. He made that leap to storytelling, instead of 'Sam Raimi, star of the movie.' "

Raimi says that he was intent on making a character-driven drama this time. "I appreciate the artistry of the horror film," he told me, "but the movies I see are not those. They are stories of real people, or a mix of real people and adventure, like 'The Treasure of the Sierra Madre,' which I love." "A Simple Plan" contains the first fully rounded characters that Raimi has ever had to deal with, particularly in Billy Bob Thornton's portrayal of the older of the two brothers, who is a bit simple-minded, yet psychologically complex. Still, there are moments in which Raimi's horror expertise is evident, as in a scene where the younger brother, played by Bill Paxton, first climbs into the cockpit of the crashed plane. For all Raimi's talk about the power of character, he knows exactly what to do with a pilot's decomposing corpse, a trapped, thrashing black crow, a lot of dark, cold metal, and a camera to leave his audience aghast with anxiety.

RAIMI'S defining memory of the power of film is watching his father's home movies. "I remember seeing footage of my seventh-birthday party," he says. "It was a Halloween party, and he showed all the kids playing party games outside, and then he showed them leaving the party, and then, on the same reel, he showed them arriving at the party. I was so taken with the fact that he had shuffled the order of reality. I thought, This is unbelievable. Something about it made me giddy. It seemed like we were tampering with God's world, altering something that was far beyond our ken. That was what I was attracted to. I wasn't attracted to 'the movies.' I've often read about these filmmakers who were attracted to great movies, and that had nothing to do with it for me."



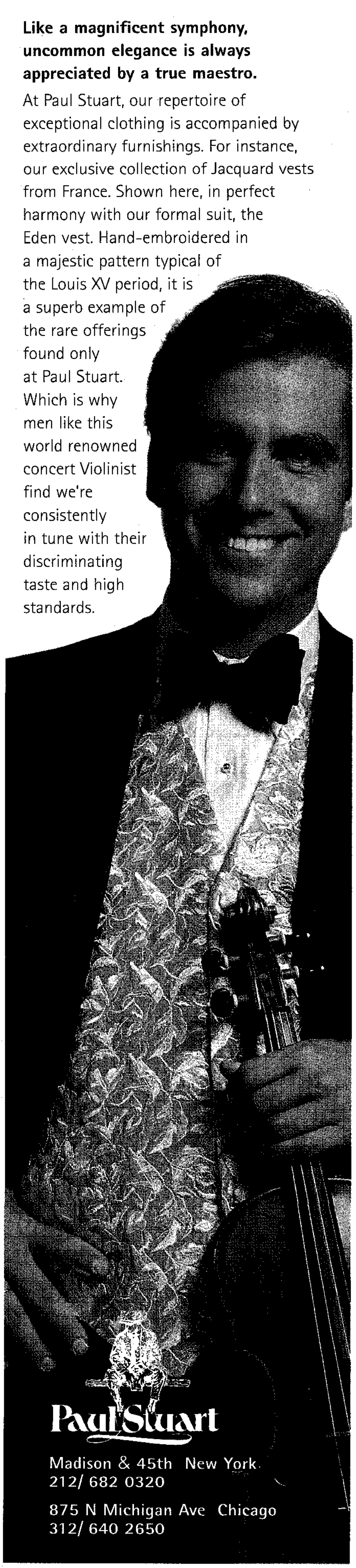
Raimi was the fourth of five children, and he grew up in Franklin, Michigan, where his mother had a retail intimate-apparel business, Lulu's Lingerie, and his father ran the furniture and appliance store that Raimi's grandfather had established. (The name Raimi is abbreviated from the German Reingewertz.) "Our house was littered with comic books, Three Stooges paraphernalia, and Fig Newton bars—that was our reality," says Ivan Raimi, Sam's older brother, who is now an emergency-room doctor and a sometime collaborator on Raimi screenplays. Another brother, Ted, is a star of "Xena."

An early influence was the eldest Raimi brother, Sander, who was six years Sam's senior. "He used to perform magic at my parties when I was younger," Raimi told me. "Incredible magic, with electricity and chemicals and fire." By all accounts, Sander was the brilliant boy in the family. At the age of fifteen, he was selected to go on a scholarship trip to Israel. There he drowned in a swimming-pool accident.

"My parents pulled their strength together to make sure we survived it," Raimi said. "But it colors everything you do for the rest of your life." After Sander's death, Sam learned how to do the tricks himself. (He recently brushed up on his skills to perform at his son's preschool.)

Raimi's first movies were made on a Super-8 camera his father gave him when he was thirteen years old. He collaborated with a crowd of neighborhood boys, including Bruce Campbell, whom he had met in junior high school. "I remember seeing Sam dressed as Sherlock Holmes and sitting on the floor at school playing with little dolls, and I knew immediately the guy was different," Campbell says. Other members of the team were John Cameron, who has gone on to produce for the Coen brothers, and Scott Spiegel, now a screenwriter and director in Los Angeles.

"We would meet every Saturday and Sunday, and make Civil War movies," Raimi said. "We made 'The Civil War,'



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Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3. Me and those boys made 'The Jimmy Hoffa Story,' Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3. We read in the paper about him being kidnapped, and the next Sunday we went to the place where it happened and shot it. We made 'James Bombed,' starring Bruce Campbell. We made 'Six Months to Live,' the story of a guy who finds out he's got an incurable disease and decides he is going to spend as much money as possible, and then, of course, he learns that he is not going to die, and he has to kill himself.

"Up until eighth grade, we would play the women's roles in drag. Our backward social skills prevented us from knowing women, but finally we overcame that. We'd say to girls, 'O.K., come and be in "Pies and Guys" next Sunday—you're the baker.' Or we'd say, 'Bruce Campbell comes home and he catches you with the six-months-to-live guy in the sequel we're making, called "Six More Months." ' "

After high school, Raimi went to Michigan State, where he and his roommate, Rob Tapert, made movies to show on campus. "The Happy Valley Kid," a Super-8 movie that cost seven hundred dollars and grossed thirty-five hundred dollars, was the story of an M.S.U. student who goes on a rampage the week before finals. "It was a big hit on campus, because the kids really liked watching the professors get blown away," Raimi said. "I learned, 'Oh, it is the exploitation aspect that sells.' "

After a year and a half of college, Raimi dropped out, as did Tapert, and they started to work with Bruce Campbell on "The Evil Dead," raising money by working as busboys and cabdrivers and janitors. (The working title was "The Book of the Dead," but a foreign-sales agent vetoed it. "He said, 'Book? That won't sell anything,' " Raimi said.) They chose horror because, Raimi said, it could appeal to the drive-in market, and it offered the best chance of recouping investors' money. "I didn't really like horror films—they frightened me," he recalled. "But, as I studied them, I began to see that there is an art to them, and there is a craft to making suspense, and I realized how interesting that process was. I would watch the suspense build in a picture, and it would be released and the audience would jump and scream, and I thought, This is kind of fantastic: they are being brought to a level here, and how long can we sustain that level? And should we break it with a scare, or should we bring it down gradually, or should we end the scene on a high note? I began to understand that making a horror film was like writing a piece of music: it's like watching the work of a composer."

Raimi and team shot "The Evil Dead" in a freezing cabin in Tennessee over the course of twelve weeks, burning props for firewood as they went, and improvising camera techniques to compensate for their lack of high-tech equipment. The unsteady, racing shots were done with the use of a "shaky cam," otherwise known as a "Sam-Ram-a-cam"—a camera screwed onto a two-by-four, which could be carried along at ground level. "It was like a punk horror film," Rob Tapert says. "Sam was the one who kept saying, 'We are going to make the audience hurt.' "

"Back then, it was a much more infantile goal," Raimi said. "Get a response, get a visceral, audible response. Will they jump, and how high? And can we measure their movement in inches?" Joel Coen, who worked on "The Evil Dead" with a veteran editor named Edna Paul, recalls, "It was clear when we were cutting it how great it was. There was a moment when Edna and I were cutting, and Sam wanted some trims made, and I remember Edna getting very mad at him, and saying, 'Sam, you are cutting all the humanity out of the picture.' And Sam and I looked at each other, like '*What* is she talking about?' "

I WENT to visit Raimi in his apartment, and it was littered with toys and kids' videos. Raimi has moved his family into a sublet in the East Seventies while he's shooting "For Love of the Game" in New York, but the family home is in Brentwood, and there he is an avid gardener. "He has a big green thumb," Bruce Campbell told me. "He kills things during the day and grows them back at night."

I asked Raimi how old his children would have to be before he would let them watch "The Evil Dead," and he shot back, "When they are thirty." Then he reconsidered. "I think they might enjoy 'Evil Dead II' when they are older, because it has a sense of humor. It is not really as vile." Raimi seemed slightly embarrassed about his work, as if he's yet to deliver something that has really satisfied him artistically.

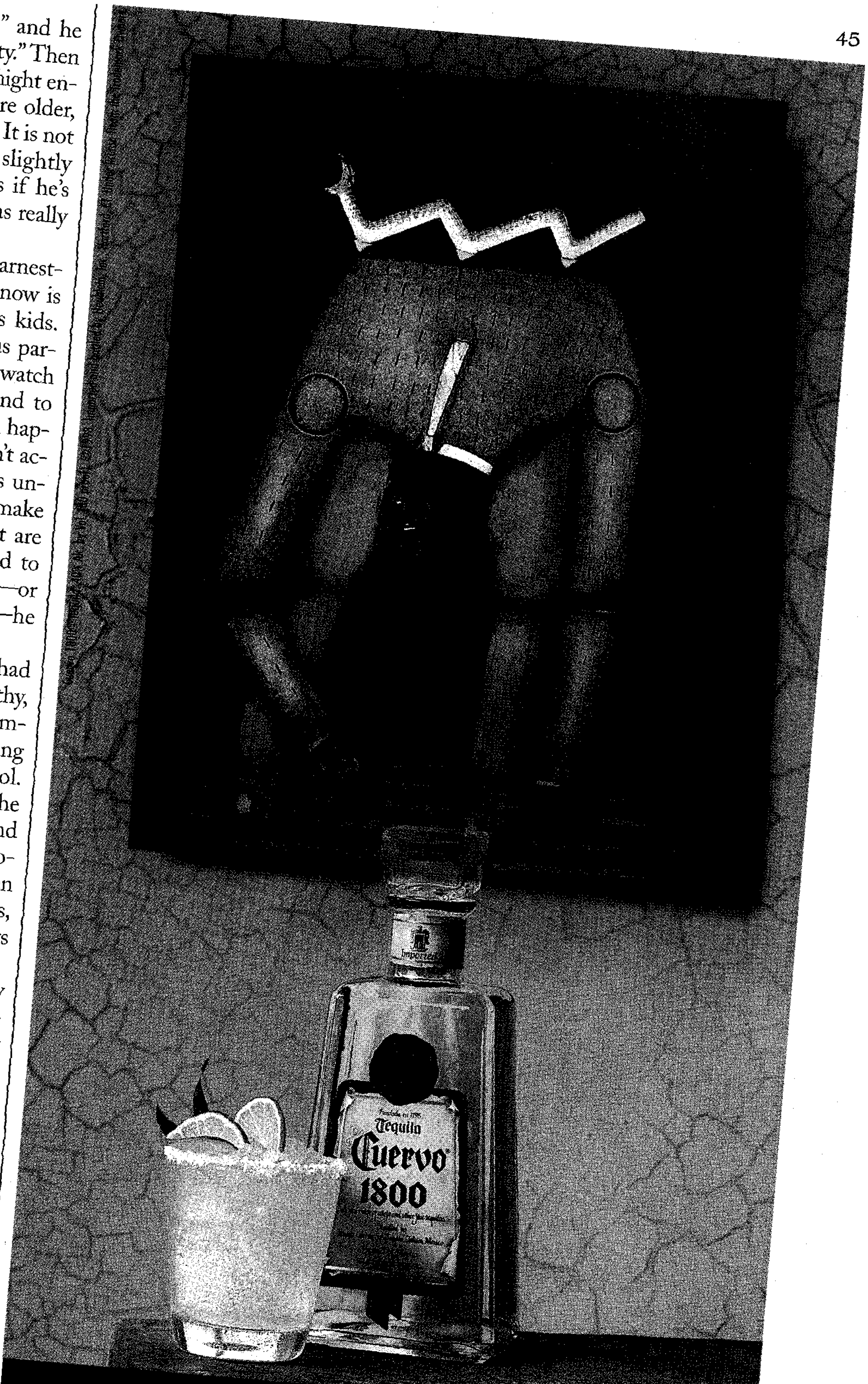
Raimi says, with unguarded earnestness, that what he wants to do now is make some good movies for his kids. He sounds like any other anxious parent who doesn't want his child to watch rubbish—a situation that is bound to be complicated when that rubbish happens to be your life's work, and isn't actually rubbish at all. Although it's understandable that Raimi wants to make movies, like "A Simple Plan," that are straightforwardly good, as opposed to movies that are so bad they're good—or even movies that are simply bad—he can't repudiate his pedigree.

"When I was eleven or twelve, I had a friend whose father was really wealthy, and he had one of the first video cameras," he told me. "So we were making skits over there every day after school. We would put toy soldiers down on the ground outside, and we would pretend the camera was a helicopter coming toward them—a battle scene. And then we would cut to the soldiers themselves, and that would be us, being participants in the fight.

"But no one watching it had any idea what we were trying to communicate. People didn't understand why we were showing toy soldiers, and then why we were suddenly bigger than they were. So we thought, O.K., how can we make this clearer? At that stage, it wasn't even about making *bad* movies—we were making movies that no one could understand. The movies had to improve, just so that people could understand what we were trying to tell them. They had to improve for people even to realize that it was a bad movie. We didn't even have that." ♦

SEATTLE—A network of gloating buoys has detected an El Niño warming pattern returning to the equatorial Pacific Ocean in the past two months, confounding predictions that the periodic weather shift is long gone.—*Santa Barbara (Calif.) News-Press.*

Gotta hate the ones that ring their own bells.



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CONSCIENTIOUS CONSUMPTION

BY DAVID BROOKS

YOU'RE a highly cultured person who has never cared all that much about money, but suddenly, thanks to the information-age economy, you find yourself making more dough than you ever expected. The problem is: How to spend all that income without looking like one of the vulgar yuppies you despise? Fortunately, a Code of Financial Correctness is emerging. It's a set of rules to guide your consumption patterns, to help you spend money in ways that are spiritually and culturally uplifting. If you follow these precepts, you'll be able to dispose of up to four or five million dollars annually in a manner that shows how little you care about material things.

Rule No. 1: Only vulgarians spend a lot of money on luxuries; restrict your lavish spending to necessities. When it comes to members of the cultivated class, the richer they get the more they emulate the Shakers. It's crass to spend sixty thousand dollars on a Porsche, but it's a sign of elevated consciousness to spend sixty-five thousand dollars on a boxy and practical Range Rover. It's decadent to spend ten thousand dollars on an outdoor Jacuzzi, but if you're not spending twenty-five thousand dollars turning a spare bed-room into a new master bath, with a freestanding copper tub in the middle of the floor and an oversized slate shower stall, it's a sign that you probably haven't learned to appreciate the simple rhythms of life.

An important corollary to Rule No. 1 is that you can never spend too much money on a room or a piece of equipment that in an earlier age would have been used primarily by the servants. It's vulgar to spend fifteen thousand dollars on a sound system and a wide-screen TV, but it's virtuous to spend fifty thousand dollars on a utilitarian room, like the kitchen. Only a bounder would buy a Louis Vuitton briefcase, but the owner of a German-made Miele White Pearl vacuum cleaner, which retails for seven hundred and forty-nine dollars, clearly has his priorities straight.

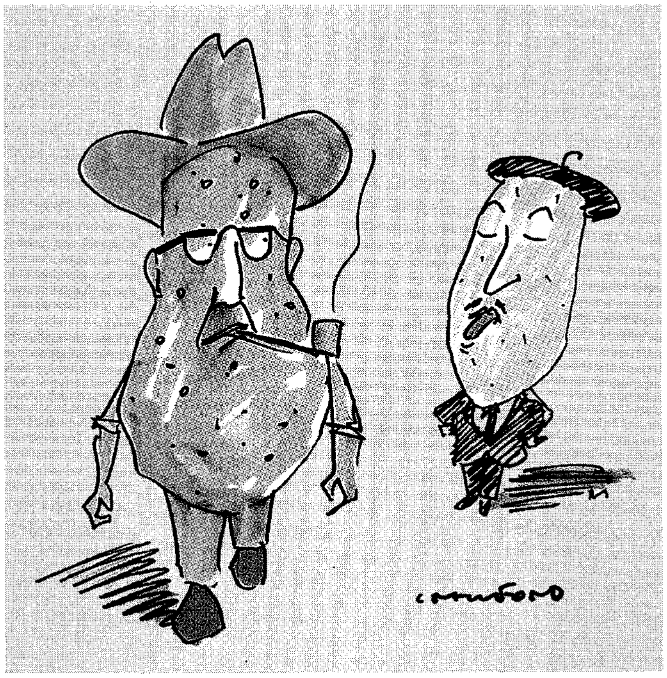
Rule No. 2: It is perfectly acceptable to spend lots of money on anything that is "professional quality," even if it has nothing to do with your profession. For example, although you are not likely ever to climb Mt. Everest, an expedition-weight three-layer Gore-Tex Alpenglow-reinforced Marmot Thunderlight jacket is a completely reasonable purchase. You may not be planning to convert your home into a restaurant, but a triple-doored Sub Zero refrigerator and a ten-thousand-dollar AGA cooker with a warming plate, a simmering plate, a baking oven, a roasting oven, and an infinite supply of burners is still a sensible acquisition.

Rule No. 3: You can never have too much texture. The high-achieving but grasping consumers of the nineteen-eighties surrounded themselves with smooth surfaces—matte black furniture, polished lacquer floors, and sleek faux-marbleized walls. To demonstrate your spiritual superiority to such people, you'll want to build an environment full of natural irregularities. Everything they made smooth you'll want to make rough. You'll hire squads of workmen with ball-peen hammers to pound some rustic authenticity into your broad floor planks. You'll import craftsmen from Umbria to create the look of crumbling frescoed plaster in your foyer. You'll want a fireplace built from craggy stones that look as if they could withstand a catapult assault. You'll want sideboards with peeling layers of paint, rough-hewn exposed beams, lichenous stone walls, weathered tiles, nubby upholstery fabrics. Remember, if your furniture is distressed your conscience needn't be.

The texture principle applies to comestibles, too. Everything you drink will leave sediment in the bottom of the glass: yeasty microbrews, unfiltered fruit juices, organic coffees. Your bread will be thick and grainy, the way wholesome peasants like it, not thin and airy, as shallow suburbanites prefer. Even your condiments will be admirably coarse; you'll know you're refined when you start using unrefined sugar.

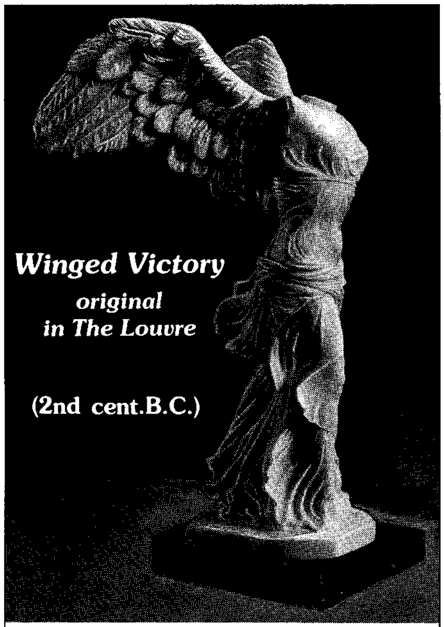
Rule No. 4: You must practice one-downmanship. Cultivated people are repelled by the idea of keeping up with the Joneses. Thus, in order to raise your own status you must conspicuously reject status symbols. You will never display gilt French antiques or precious jewelry, but you will proudly dine on a two-hundred-year-old pine table that was once used for slaughtering chickens. Your closet doors will have been salvaged from an old sausage factory. Your living-room rugs will resemble the ponchos worn by Mexican paupers. The baby gates on the stairs will have been converted from nineteenth-century rabbit hutches. Eventually, every object in your house will look as if it had once been owned by someone much poorer than you.

You will never spend large sums on things associated with the rich, like yachts, caviar, or truffles. Instead, you will buy



Why buy an Idaho spud when you can have a potato of distinction that grows only in the soil of northern France?

MICHAEL CRAWFORD



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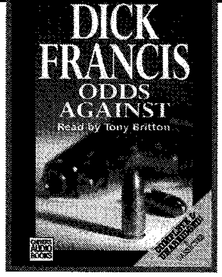

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unpretentious items associated with the proletariat—except that you'll buy pretentious versions of these items, which actual members of the proletariat would find preposterous. For example, you'll go shopping for a basic food like potatoes, but you won't buy an Idaho spud. You'll select one of those miniature potatoes of distinction that grow only in certain soils of northern France. When you need lettuce, you will choose only from among those flimsy cognoscenti lettuces that taste so bad on sandwiches. (You will buy these items in boutique grocery stores whose inventory says "A Year in Provence" even as their prices say "Ten Years Out of Medical School.")

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Rule No. 5: If you want to practice conscientious consumption, you'll want to be able to discourse knowledgeably about everything you buy. You'll favor catalogues that provide some helpful background reading on each item. You'll want your coffee shop and your bookstore to have maxims from Emerson and Arendt on the walls, because there is nothing more demeaning than shopping in a store that offers no teleological context for your purchases. You'll only patronize a butcher who hosts poetry readings. Remember, you are not merely a pawn in a mass consumer society; you are the curator of your purchases. You are able to elevate consumption above the material plane. You are able to turn your acquisitions into a set of morally informed signifiers that will win the approbation of your peers. You are able to create a life style that compensates for the fact that you abandoned your early interest in poetry and grew up to be a corporate lawyer. You care enough to spend the very most. ♦

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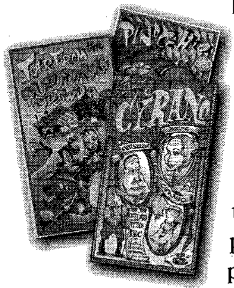

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PERSONAL HISTORY

BURIED HOMELAND

In 1941, the author's family was destroyed by the Nazis. This summer, he returned to confront the past.

BY AHARON APPELFELD

FOR years, I dreamed about going back to my childhood home, but I didn't, because after the war the region belonged to the Soviet Union and, as an Israeli, I would not have been allowed to enter it. The dream slowly faded, and I reconciled myself to the thought that I would never again see the place where I came into the world.

Then, in 1989, something unbelievable happened: the vast and mighty Soviet Empire collapsed, and the gates were opened. Holocaust survivors who had yearned for years to see their old homeland now thronged the doors of consulates to obtain visas. They knew that no one was expecting them, but still they crowded together and stood in line for hours.

I was in no hurry to join them. Over the years, after arriving in Israel, in 1946, I gradually realized that returning home after a long period of separation was not a simple matter. Years ago, I wrote a novella in which I described the reunion of a man and wife who had been separated by the war for two decades: Instead of joy and love, there arose suspicion and estrangement. Some of that sense of estrangement clung to me whenever I thought of returning.

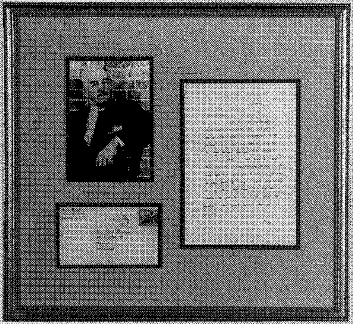
I was driven away from home at the age of eight and a half. What does a child of eight and a half remember? Almost nothing. But, miraculously, that "almost nothing" has nourished me for years. Not a day passes when I'm not at home. In my adopted country of Israel, I have written thirty books that draw directly or indirectly upon the village of my childhood, whose name is found only on ordnance maps. That "almost nothing" is the well from which I draw and draw, and it seems that there is no end to its waters.

Sometimes I think that this great plenty has come to me because I was an only child and my parents lavished upon me what others give to three children. They walked with me in the mountains until twilight and read me books, some of which I understood and most of which were beyond my understanding, and on summer nights my mother and I used to sit, contemplating the sky and listening to the silence. As soon as I was able to walk by myself, I was drawn to the green shade of the Carpathian forests. In those days, I didn't know that Hasidism, the great mystical movement in Judaism, arose in those eternal forests.

That marvellous life lasted for eight and a half years, but in June, 1941, it was cut off with a mighty clap of thunder. Germans and Romanians invaded the village, and, with the coöperation of the local population, they slaughtered most of its Jewish inhabitants. My mother and grandmother were among the slain. The invaders used old methods: they shot a few to death and butchered many more. Shouts and sobs filled the village for two days, and they continue to arouse me from my sleep.

Another life began—a life without my mother. My father and I ran away from the village, to the ghetto in Czernovitz. Later, soldiers rounded us up and drove us to the camps in Transnistria. First our lives were embittered with hunger, then with cold. I was separated from my father, left alone with the hungry women and children, and was consumed by the visions of death that had already infected so many other people. Children who were playing "five stones" on the cement floor at night were found frozen to death the next morning.

Who extricated me and bore me back to life? I don't know. Sometimes it seems to me that my mother, who often appeared in my dreams, whispered to me to get up and go. About those blind and tortured years, when I was a child, wandering from village to village, frightened but determined to survive, I have hardly written. Indeed, I have written very little about the war in general. In war, the body shrinks and the soul fades; hunger and cold take control of you. In the end, your life is compacted into a single desire: to die as quickly as possible.



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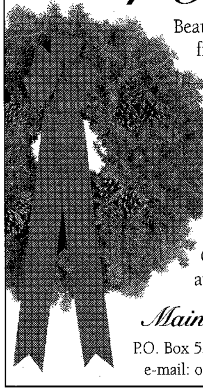

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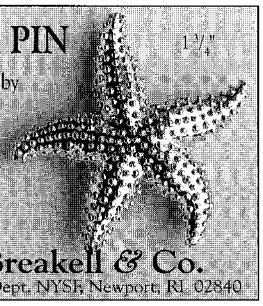

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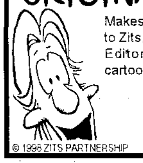

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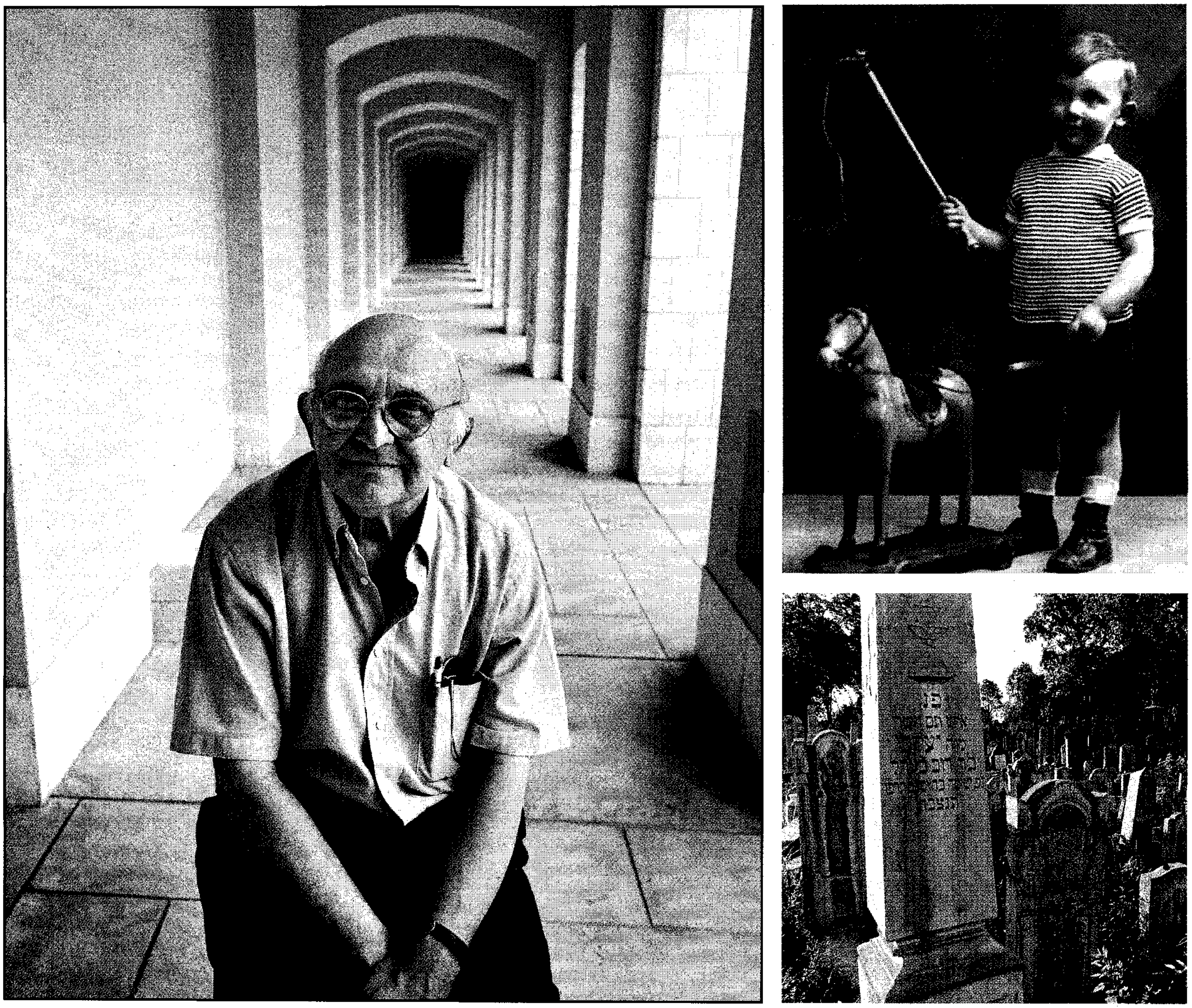


Clockwise from left: Appelfeld photographed in 1997 by Frédéric Brenner; at the age of four; and the old Jewish cemetery in Czernovitz. By returning home, he was afraid that "reality would come and slap me in the face."

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY AHARON APPELFELD; BOTTOM RIGHT: MARTIN FEIER/JOKER/SUDDEUTSCHER VERLAG

Still, all the books I have written draw upon the war. There I learned things about life that no school can teach. There I learned about the connection between body and soul: when the body is weak, the soul shrivels within it. There I learned about hatred and cruelty. People who hate develop particular twitches: I can distinguish them from afar. There I learned that even in Hell there is generosity and nobility. I can also tell from afar whether a person was in the camps and in what regions of suffering he dwelled. We, the survivors, smell each other out, like animals. We're drawn to one another, and at the same time we flee from one another. My few comrades in suffering won't touch my books, because they sense that I'm revealing something of their inner lives. It's their inner rather than their outer lives that frighten them. But I've been lucky in my friendships. When I was taking my first steps as a writer, one friend or another would come to me at night and leave an envelope full of money on my desk, so that I would be free to write. My first steps as a writer were so feeble that only blind friendship and great generosity could have tipped the balance in my favor.

ANOTHER reason I delayed making the trip home was that I didn't want to put the work of my imagination to the test of reality. Over the years, I had built a village of my own, with peasants and Jews of my own devising, and I was afraid that reality would come and slap me in the face, by showing me that I had made many errors. True, a few survivors from the area had flattered me by praising the precision of my descriptive details, but I didn't believe them. I knew the power of imagination, but I also knew that it could be deceptive.

Though I didn't inquire about what had changed in my homeland since I left it, I did find quite a few rumors stealing into my ears: that the region had been altered beyond recognition; that there were no more local Jews; that the poverty was great; and that in the years after Ukraine gained independence distress was widespread.

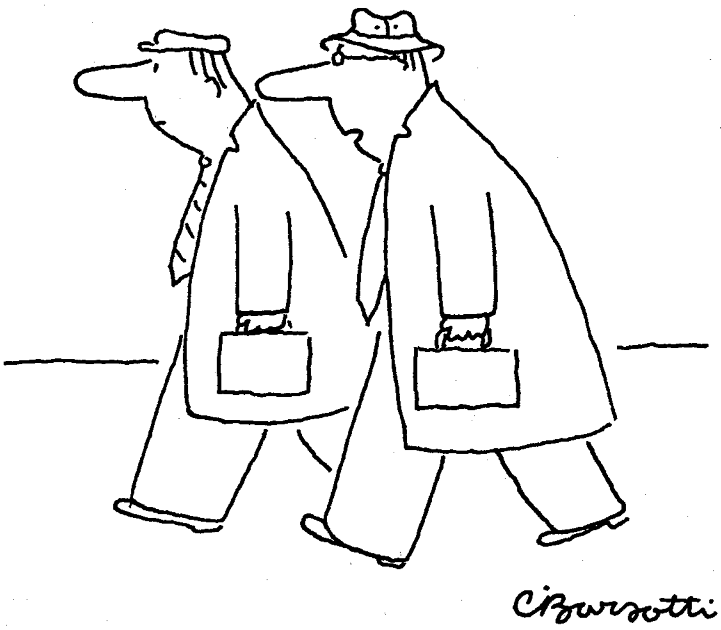
From pamphlets, photographs, and articles, I learned what I hadn't managed to learn in school: My native region is called Bukovina, and its capital is Czernovitz. From 1774 to 1918, the area belonged to the Hapsburg Empire. In 1918, it was transferred to Romania. In 1940, under the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, it was annexed to the Soviet Union. In 1941, the Romanians reconquered Bukovina with the help of the Germans. In 1944, the Russians liberated the region, and since then it has belonged to Ukraine.

That is the historical outline, and it tells everything and nothing. The outline doesn't tell, for example, about the love of the local Jewish intelligentsia for the German language—a devoted love, which gave rise to marvellous poets, like Paul Celan and Rosa Auslander, to name only the best-known ones. Until the First World War, Bukovina belonged to the famous triangle of Prague, Budapest, and Vienna—a multinational empire under whose broad and enlightened wings Jews were protected. Jews knew freedom of movement, secondary and academic education, and human dignity, so it is no wonder that assimilation grew and spread here. Faith that life was progressing toward an exalted goal characterized the entire Jewish intelligentsia. The Hasidism of Vizhnitz and Sadgora, which was well known in these parts, gradually declined in the shadow of the belief in progress and the conviction that the Jewish religion was an anachronism that would gradually disappear.

I soaked up the region in three houses. My paternal grandfather's house stood in a village called Zadova, and that is where I was born. Grandfather was a strictly observant Jew. He was gentle with me, but he intimidated my father. He was very angry at my father for ceasing to keep the commandments. What's more, my father, instead of reading the Torah with his son, was reading him books in German. The second house, where we lived most of the year, and where most of our property was concentrated, was in the village of Drajinetz, twenty kilometres from the capital. Here lived my mother's mother, a God-fearing woman. My father and mother ran the household as freethinkers. My grandmother's protests were heard from time to time, but hers was a voice crying in the wilderness. My third home was the capital, Czernovitz, where my parents and I would spend weekends, celebrate birthdays, go to the cinema and the theatre, eat in elegant restaurants, have our pictures taken, and visit toy shops and other stores.

There were many languages within me. My mother tongue was German. The language of the village was Ruthenian. Traditional Jews spoke Yiddish. The regime between the wars was Romanian, so people also spoke Romanian. The most aristocratic language was French. The Jews spoke all those languages, some fluently and some haltingly. In our house, German was insisted upon, as though it embodied everything good and beautiful.

In 1996, it became clear to me that I could no longer put off my return home. An old feeling of guilt, which I had repressed for many of years, floated up. Its essence was a mass grave in the village of Drajinetz, in which my mother and grandmother were buried. The thought that one day I might stand by that grave in silence would not leave me. I am not an observant Jew, but my connection with the faith of my fathers has always been deep. I inherited it from my mother. My mother was not observant either, but her belief in the spiritual—though she



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didn't use that word—was fervent and clear, seeming to say that the circle of life is wider than we imagine. That sense of the world, which was embodied in her silent gaze, haunted me, and I very much wanted to connect with her life in the place where it had come to an end more than fifty years ago, when she was thirty-three and I was eight and a half.

Everybody discouraged me from going there. Ukraine, I was told, was engulfed in anarchy: the mafia ruled, and travel to the villages was dangerous. But those warnings only strengthened my resolve, and it was strengthened all the more when I heard, earlier this year, that a crew from Israeli educational television was going to the region to photograph the cemeteries, the remains of the camps, and the mass graves. I immediately asked to join the expedition. The group included my wife, Judith; Yitzhak Artzi, who came from the region and had done a great deal to save Jews during the war; his daughter, the writer Nava Semel; two senior staff members from Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust Memorial institution; and the television crew. The realization that my private tragedy was bound up with the great tragedy of the Jewish people drew me out of my shell. Although I am a child of modern literature, in which the individual is the chief concern, I feel that were it not for my ties to the Jews and to Judaism my individuality would be shallow.

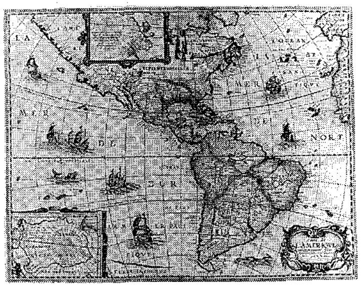
WE flew to Bucharest, and from there we made our way to the Ukrainian border along roads that could scarcely be described as roads. We immediately felt the heavy hand of the Ukrainian bureaucracy: customs officials examined our documents and our equipment for five hours, and we reached Czernovitz at midnight. The city lay half in darkness, but I could nevertheless see that it wasn't the city I had known. Ugly new houses stood row upon row, an inheritance from the Communist regime. This was not my Czernovitz, along whose avenues I had loved to stroll with my parents, and where I had spent the happiest hours of my life. Fatigue now rescued me, as it sometimes does, and I sank into deep sleep. I dreamed about nothing, as though I wished to flee this place.

The next morning, we left our modern hotel, which had been built under the Communists, and strolled to the center of town. To my surprise, the center was as I remembered it. Signs of neglect were everywhere, but from the neglect peered evidence of the beauty of Little Vienna, as Czernovitz had been called in the good, tranquil days of the Hapsburg monarchy. Herrengasse, the street of fashionable clothing stores, restaurants, and cafés, was not what it had been, but beneath the peeling walls one could see delicate traces of the old elegance. The familiar buildings were still in place: the Black Eagle Hotel, the city hall, the theatre, the Jewish theatre, the splendid university. A child's eyes had looked upon them with wonder, many years ago. Now, although the magic was gone, every street corner reminded me of an outing with my parents, a surprising gift, the fresh breezes of summer, the fragrance of flowers from a flower shop, and my father's invitation "Let's go to Café Europa."

A childhood city is an ideal city. Czernovitz had always been a holiday for me. I had seen broad, freshly washed sidewalks, iron fences that were works of art, the shadows of chestnut trees. Along its streets I had looked into display windows, and into cafés lit up in Viennese style—cafés where my parents had coffee and strudel and I was served a generous portion of ice cream. Ever since then, when I have written about a city, it has been Czernovitz.

IF Czernovitz is the model city for me, Drajinetz is my model village. When I was a month old, I was brought there from Zadova, and I lived in Drajinetz for more than eight years. My mother's beautiful face was revealed to me there, and it was there that she was snatched from me.

Our house in Drajinetz had double-glazed windows during the winter to keep in the warmth; in the spring, the inner panes were removed. There were window boxes full of red flowers; big glass doors, which transferred the light from room to room; and broad-shouldered Ruthenian servant women. In summer, I played in the courtyard, and I used to sit for hours watching a hen pecking or a long-necked goose tensely shielding her goslings. Who could have imagined that in this village, on a Saturday, our Sabbath, sixty-two souls, most of them women and children, would fall prey to pitchforks and kitchen knives, and I, because I



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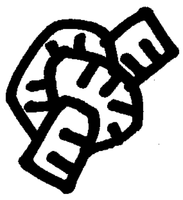
was in a back room, would manage to escape to the cornfields and hide?

For years, that village lay within me, and now I was approaching it. I couldn't find anything recognizable about it. All the buildings were low, enveloped in shadows and vines, and looked like one another. Signs said "Drajinetz," but I couldn't identify anything familiar. It was noon, and the young people I encountered apparently didn't know that Jews had ever lived there. Perhaps they were feigning ignorance. Judith and I met an old man in a wheelchair, which he propelled with his hands. He must have been in the village when my family lived there, but he was hurrying to the doctor and wouldn't speak with us. Another old man came toward us. He remembered the Jews—he even mentioned two names—but he had never heard about the slaughter. The villagers surrounded us. I remembered those faces: a mixture of cunning, suspicion, and false innocence. The answers they gave were convoluted, and it was hard to know what was true and what was made up.



"Where is the mass grave?" I asked with the help of an interpreter. No one knew. Suddenly the sob of the slaughter rose within me—the sob I hear at night—and it made me dizzy. Raising my voice, I said, "I lived here until the age of eight and a half, and I know that Jews were slaughtered here." No response. I felt the villagers' stares on my body.

Approximately a hundred Jews had lived in the village, most of them merchants. After the slaughter, their houses were plundered. It struck me that some treasures of ours must still be hidden in those houses. Maybe my books. Maybe my parents' library, my grandmother's prayer books.

The peasants looked at me with tense expressions. Perhaps I had come to claim property, or to look for old Nazi collaborators. Peasants in this region have always been wary—you can't discover their thoughts easily. Suddenly, one of them turned to me and asked, "What do you remember from then?" Not very much, I wanted to say, but I restrained myself. My delay in replying brought a smile to the man's lips, and he said, "See, you've also forgotten."

I was discouraged. For a moment, it seemed to me that I had come here by mistake—that this was no longer my village. Perhaps it had changed so drastically that no vestiges of it remained. I raised my eyes, and some distance away I saw a two-story brick building and, opposite it, a church. I had no further doubt: this was the village. I had finished first grade in that brick building, and on Sundays and holidays people in the village had streamed into that church. One summer, there was a drought, and I could remember a procession leaving the church, bearing images and headed by the priest. My self-assurance returned. Everyone agreed that the brick building had once served as a school.

In my journal, years ago, I tried to reconstruct that school year:

> We were two Jewish children—in a class of forty peasant children. I was thin and was dressed in delicate clothes and my mother escorted me to the gate. That escort did not bring me much honor. During recess, all the children played with a red rubber ball in the yard, raising dust and yelling. I used to stand at the window and watch. Even then, I apparently knew that I would never play freely, like them. The feeling was painful, but it was also amusing, a mixture of inferiority and superiority. I could amuse myself in my thoughts as long as I was beyond the other children's reach. In their presence I was a target for kicks, slaps, or pinches.
>
> They were taller and sturdier than I was. I knew that even if I exerted all my strength I couldn't narrow the gap. They would always rule the corridor and the schoolyard. On a whim, they beat you or left you alone. Sometimes when I sensed an attack coming, I would stand on the stone stairs and yell at the top of my lungs, mostly to overcome my fear.
>
> Mother tried to intervene with the principal. Her effort was useless. Forty sturdy bodies were opposed to me, a mighty torrent of legs that swept aside everything that stood in their way, including me. Several times, I tried to defend myself. That made no impression on the gang. On the contrary, by claiming that I had started it, they now had even more reason to hit me. The other Jewish boy had abandoned me in the battle. Soon, he changed completely. Even though he was thinner than I was, he fitted well into the games in the schoolyard. What he couldn't do by strength was done by agility. After a while, he turned his back on me, as though he were no longer a member of the tribe.
>
> Day after day, from the early morning hours, and in the winter, from the dark morning hours, until two in the afternoon, I was in the company of that wild herd, and is it any wonder that I don't remember a single name—not even that of the pale-faced teacher, who was Jewish? She struggled with that mass of people, who, at the age of seven, were already full of the urge to destroy. This teacher stood by helplessly, shouting in

vain and provoking waves of laughter. I don't remember faces, but I remember the broad stone stairs very well and the dark, humid hallway, with the flood of legs sliding down and galloping out.

In all that fear, the only consolation I had was the malicious joy I felt when the school's janitors disciplined the other children. These two old men roamed around the corridors and the courtyard like quiet and cunning agents of justice. If a boy acted up, they would seize him and give him ten lashes, and if he was impudent they would add another five more. The victim, after receiving his punishment, had to kiss the hand of the man who had beaten him and say, "As you command, Father." Then the boy would clear out. That was the ceremony, and it was repeated several times every week. Because I was a polite, obedient boy, the janitors never beat me. I was beaten by the other boys. Malicious joy was my only joy in that place.

FIFTY-SEVEN years had passed since then, and the memory of that prolonged indignity had not been erased from my heart. Now I stood in the courtyard of that school—a courtyard that no longer had walls—surrounded by the village people. I am a native of this place, I told them, perhaps to remind them that I had a certain moral right to be there, or perhaps to remind myself of that.

I left the courtyard and turned in the direction of my parents' house. Two newer houses now occupied its place. But it appeared that my father's flour mill was still there—smaller than it had been. My father's mill had burned down, the villagers explained, and been replaced by a smaller one. I circled the mill to see whether any of the original structure remained, and I noticed that the foundations had not been disturbed.

More peasants gathered. They inspected me, and I inspected them. "Who remembers the Appelfeld family?" I asked. When they understood my question, a tremor passed among them. One of the old men approached me and said, "It's hard to remember family names. We remember given names." I said nothing. For some reason, it was hard for me to mention the names of my father and mother.

Then a tall man, dressed in city clothes, appeared. He asked why the crowd had gathered. The peasants explained that I had been asking questions. I told him my family name. The man looked at me alertly and exclaimed, "You're Erwin Appelfeld!" He went on to say, "Your mother's name was Bunya, and your father was Michael. I studied in

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school with you. Do you remember me?"

I couldn't breathe. The man asked how many children I had and where I lived. Hearing that I had three children and that I lived in Jerusalem, he burst into tears. Now it was clear to everyone: I was not a chance visitor. Even so, the villagers were reluctant to tell me where the mass grave was. "The Jews were slaughtered here," I declared again. Again, there was no response.

A tall peasant came up, and, as if in an old ceremony, the village people explained to him what I wanted to know. He raised his arm and pointed: it was over there, on a hill. There was silence, then an outpouring of speech, which I could not understand.

It turned out that what the people of the village had tried to conceal from me was well known, even to the children. I asked several little children, who were standing near the fence and looking at us, where the Jews' graves were. Right away, they raised their hands and pointed.

As we climbed the hill, a glorious landscape greeted us: the Carpathian Mountains, in their full splendor. Here people still tilled the land as they had done for generations, without machinery. The hoe, the pitchfork, and the horse-drawn plow were their tools. The cultivated fields were a green, yellow, and red mosaic. The distant mountains cast dark-blue shadows on the nearer hilltops. Nothing prevented peace and beauty from dwelling here.

The villagers walked at our side, as though to see what mischief we might do. I asked them what they remembered from the times when Jews lived here. They were stingy with their words, but finally one of them said, "Here's the grave." He pointed at an uncultivated field.

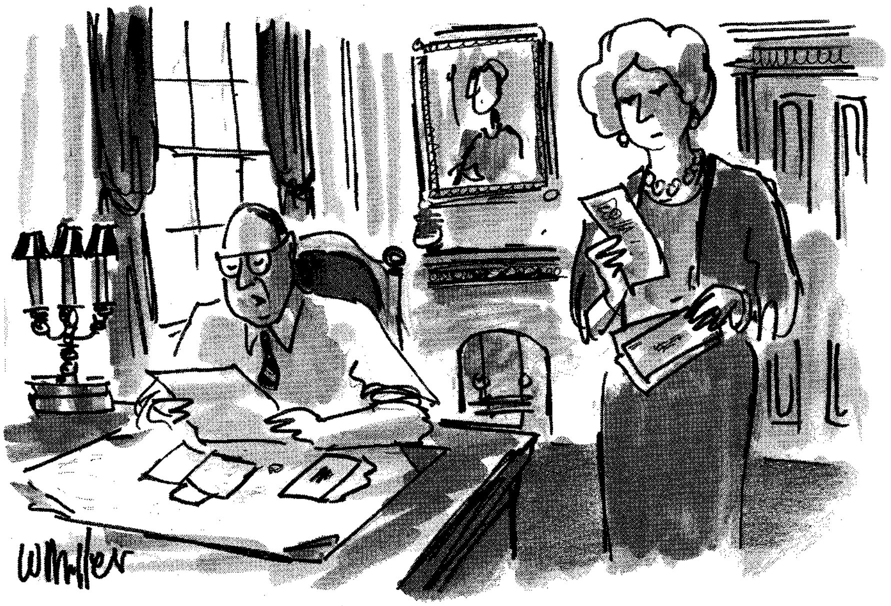
"Are you sure?" I asked.

"I buried them," the peasant replied. He added, "I was sixteen."

A book of psalms that I had brought along rescued me from muteness. I opened it and read the first psalm. Two members of the Israeli television crew joined me in reciting the Kaddish. Upon hearing the prayers, the peasants withdrew. We stood in silence. Many thoughts raced through my mind, but none that I could grasp. My mother's face, whose features I had preserved for so many years, was suddenly erased from my memory. I looked at the peasants. They stared back, as if wondering what I was going to say. Some of the women began to weep, but no one approached me.

Once again, I asked an old peasant what he remembered from that time. "I don't remember much," he said, and he placed his hand on his chest. Then he said that he did remember our neighbor Mr. Saler, who owned a grocery store—that he used to buy candy from him.

Walking down the hill, I felt a strong desire to stay in the village, to go from house to house and ask what people remembered of the old days, but I knew that even if I were to stay there for a month I would discover nothing new. If the Jews had once appeared to the peasants as servants of Satan, they were now ghosts who rose from the mass graves scattered among the villages. I had



"No. I don't want to see an all-male production of 'Little Women.'"

heard about that fear. The rabbi in Czernovitz had told us that Ruthenian peasant women came to him to ask not only for advice or a blessing but also for forgiveness for what the Ukrainians did to the Jews. In Czernovitz, we had found many church candles placed on the graves of famous rabbis. It seemed that, even though no Jews remained in the city, their spirits wandered about everywhere, and must be appeased.

WE left the village of Drajinetz and turned toward Vizhnitz, an hour's drive away. My grandfather had taken me there once, without my parents' permission. Grandfather was a Vizhnitz Hasid and read the Torah in the synagogue on Sabbaths and holidays. Hundreds of Hasidim crowded into the synagogue. Grandfather read, and I saw that all eyes were raised to him. Father wasn't pleased by that visit, because he, like most of his generation, was convinced that the Jewish religion was anachronistic, and that one should look to psychology and science.

I now discovered that there were no Jews left in Vizhnitz, either. The splendid house of the rebbe had become a dairy. The cemetery was neglected, and the tombstones had sunk into the earth or else were about to fall over. In the tabernacle of the rabbis of Vizhnitz I found a box full of slips of paper. Apparently, they were supplications left by Ukrainian peasant women seeking help.

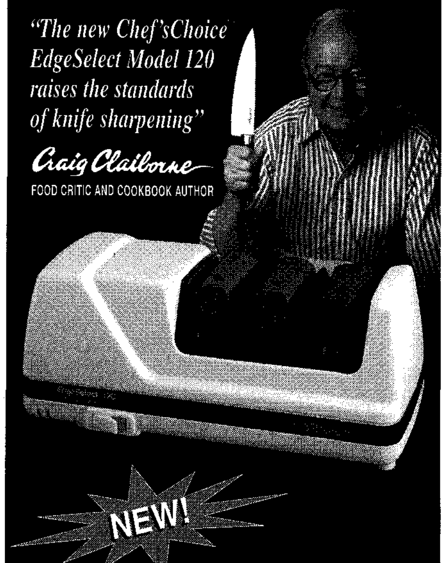
We returned to Czernovitz. While the camera crew was photographing the temple—or, rather, its strange incarnation, as a movie house, casino and billiards hall—I saw a short man approaching. I immediately recognized him as a survivor and greeted him. He was a Jew from the area, named Eliezer, and he was about my age. He, too, had been in the camps and had lost all his family. After the liberation, he had returned to the city, had studied and excelled, and had ultimately become the chief engineer of a factory. Now he was a pensioner. He inquired about my profession, and when I told him that I was a writer he said, "If so, you certainly know the author Aharon Appelfeld."

"That's who I am," I said. The man turned pale and stepped back. He was from my village. We had played together in the meadows behind our house. He had been a year ahead of me in school. We had belonged to a study group for Jewish children which met in the afternoons. He remembered everything: the names of the Jews and the names of the non-Jews. The information jogged my memory slightly, but the fog was greater than the clarity.

Eliezer explained that I remembered so little because I was an only child and my parents didn't allow me to move about freely in the village. "You certainly developed thoughts because you were at home most of the day," he said. Perhaps he was right. He remembered my house and my parents better than I did. He had thought about me for years, documenting every detail in his memory. Now I stood before him like an empty vessel that asked to be filled. We walked around. He revealed many details to me about my family, about the sad fate of other survivors, about the few who remained, scattered all over the world.

The next morning, one of the television crew called out my name, and a woman who was passing by took my arm and said, "Are you Mr. Appelfeld? I've been living with your book 'Katerina' for months." Two years ago, several chapters of my novel "Katerina" had been published in a Ukrainian literary journal, and since then I had apparently won quite a few friends among Ukrainian writers. The woman held my arm. Her name was Tamara, and I eventually learned that she was a well-known poet. Most of her friends were Jews. The Jews she originally knew had disappeared in the camps or had emigrated to distant lands. In a city full of ghosts, it's not surprising that strange things happen to you. This city wasn't my city. Its language wasn't my language. Still, the buildings—or what was left of them—contained precious memories. From every street there rose up uncles and aunts, and cousins my age. I wanted to stop them and touch them, but they slipped by like the shadows they were.

We visited the famous cemetery of Czernovitz. Here Jewish history was laid out from the splendid Hapsburg age through the Romanian period up until the extermination of this wonderful community. Buried here were Hasidim, assimilated Jews, Yiddishists, Zionists—every Jewish splinter group over the past two hundred years. Here were marked all the wars that the Jews had waged among themselves: religion versus secularity, Yiddish versus Hebrew, and Zionism versus the Bund, which advocated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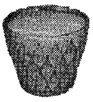
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assimilation and the brotherhood of all socialist movements. Viewed over the distance of the years, those quarrels seemed strange, if not ridiculous. No one, apparently, had foreseen the true enemy.

FROM Czernovitz we travelled to the great cemetery of the Jews in Bukovina—a cemetery that extends along the Dniester and Bug rivers and is called Transnistria. Here, during the war, the Jews of Bukovina and Bessarabia were brought in trains and on forced marches. They were dispersed across this broad plain—some to labor camps, some to ghettos, and some to extermination camps. In 1941, death was not yet industrialized, and any means of killing was used. My father and I were on a forced march that began with two hundred people and ended with thirty. I tried to describe that march in one of my journals:

> For days now we have been trudging through roads of deep mud, a long convoy, surrounded by Romanian soldiers and Ukrainian irregulars who slash us with whips and shoot. Father holds my hand very tightly. My short legs don't touch the ground anymore. The chill of the mud cuts my hips. Darkness is all around, except for Father's hand. I don't feel anything, actually, not even his hand. My hand is already partly paralyzed. I know: only a slight movement, and I'll drown. Not even Father can save me. Many children have already drowned that way.
>
> At night, when the convoy stops, Father fishes me out of the mud and wipes my feet with his coat. I lost my shoes long ago, and I sink my frozen feet in the lining of his coat for a moment. The tiny bit of heat hurts so much that I quickly withdraw my feet. That rapid movement, for some reason, makes Father angry, and I burst into tears. Father consoles me and says that now we mustn't indulge ourselves. Mother used to use the word "indulge" a lot, but now it sounds strange, as though Father or I were mistaken. I don't let go of his hand and fall asleep. Not for long.
>
> While the sky is still dark, the soldiers wake up the convoy with whips and shots. Father carries me on his shoulders, and when the whip strikes him, he sets me on my feet and drags me. The mud is deep, and I can't feel solid ground. It hurts me, I cry. Father responds immediately: make things easier for me, easier. I have heard those words more than once here. After those words a fall was heard, a cry, a vain effort to save the drowning child. Not only children drown. Even tall people fall to their knees and drown. In the autumn the water rises, and the road is a deep bog. Father can no longer carry his rucksack and drag me along at the same time. He opens the rucksack and throws some of the clothes into the mud. Now his hand holds me very tightly. At night when the convoy halts, he rubs and massages my arms and legs and dries them with the lining of his coat. For a moment it seems to me that not only Father is with me but also Mother, whom I loved so much.

Now our first stop in the realm of horror called Transnistria was the town of Mogilev—the first circle of death. The remains of its ghetto were still evident, but no one—except a few remaining Jews—remembered a thing about it. Death is not something people like to remember or to speak of. In Mogilev, as in the other nearby towns we visited, old Jews gathered around us, speaking Yiddish. Over the years, they had been waiting for someone to come and listen to their story. We were willing to listen. Every place had its own atrocities—among them, the towns of Shargorod, Tulchin, and Spikov. The camp in Peciora was a row of buildings lying in a large park. During the time of the tsars, the place had belonged to Count Potocki. Under the Bolsheviks, it was a sanitarium. Under the Nazis, it became an extermination camp. Now it served as a hospital. The contrast between the beautiful surroundings and what those buildings had held was striking. Thousands of people perished in the buildings, and those who didn't had been taken out and killed on the banks of the Bug. A peasant woman whom we met told us that people were shot, then thrown into the mass grave along with people still living. The pits trembled for several days after they were covered. At the entrance to the park, we found a sign saying that Soviet citizens had been executed at that spot. There was no indication that they were Jews.

Every town or village had a neglected Jewish cemetery and, not far away, a mass grave. In a short time, those traces would vanish, and the region would be not only without Jews but without any memory of them. The tragedy of the Holocaust is epitomized by, among other things, the inability to grasp its enormity. I knew that, but now it was driven home to me. Strange, how little we have to say in the presence of death. Even a believer stands mute. Mass deaths fill us with a feeling of horror and despair—even worse, with indifference.

To extricate myself from the abyss of silence, I held fast, once again, to the memory of my mother in that little village of Drajinetz, where the world was revealed to me in trees, water, and blossoming fields: my mother and father in the living room or the broad kitchen, with their belief that the good and the beautiful were boundless.

We made our bumpy way back to the

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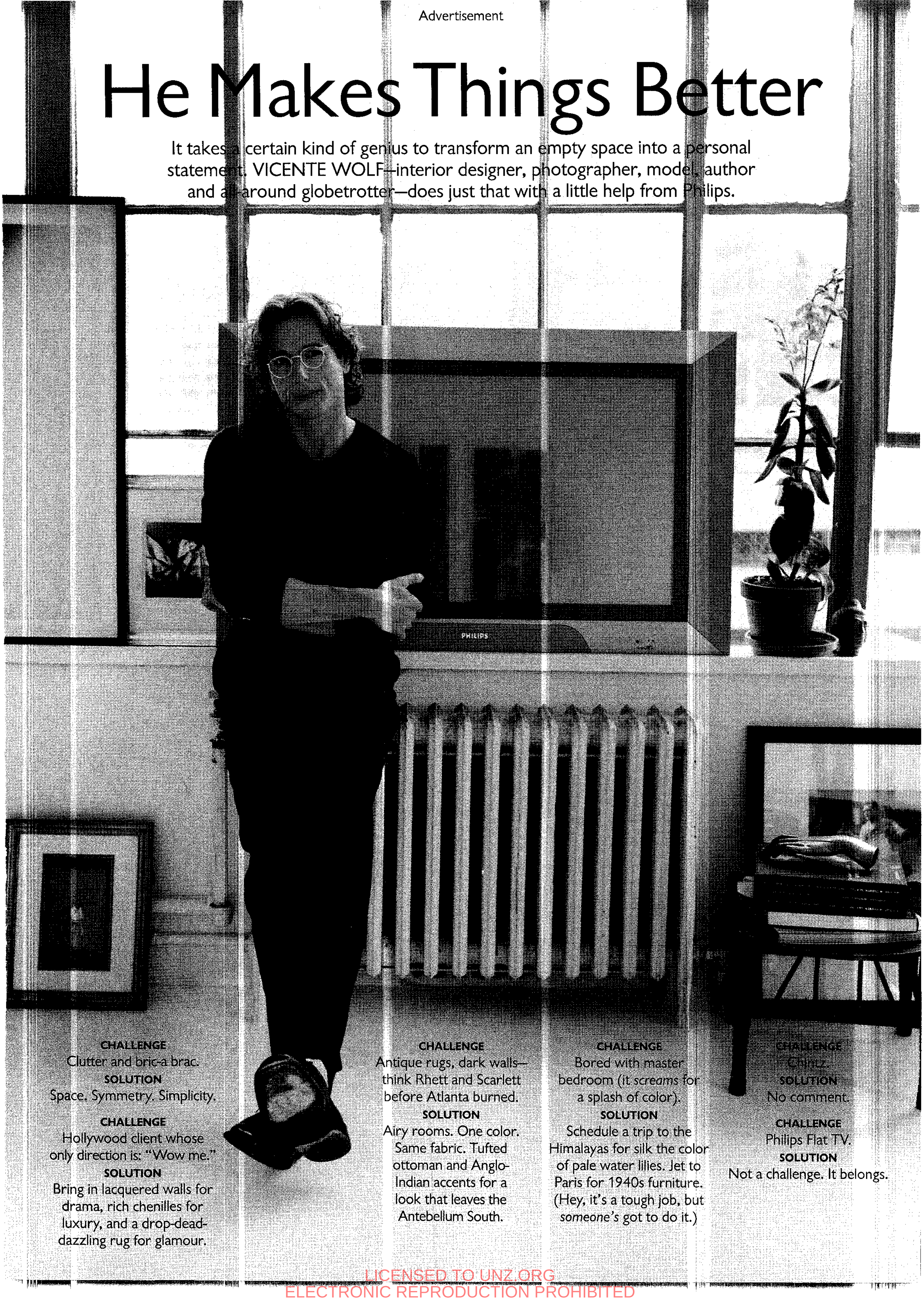

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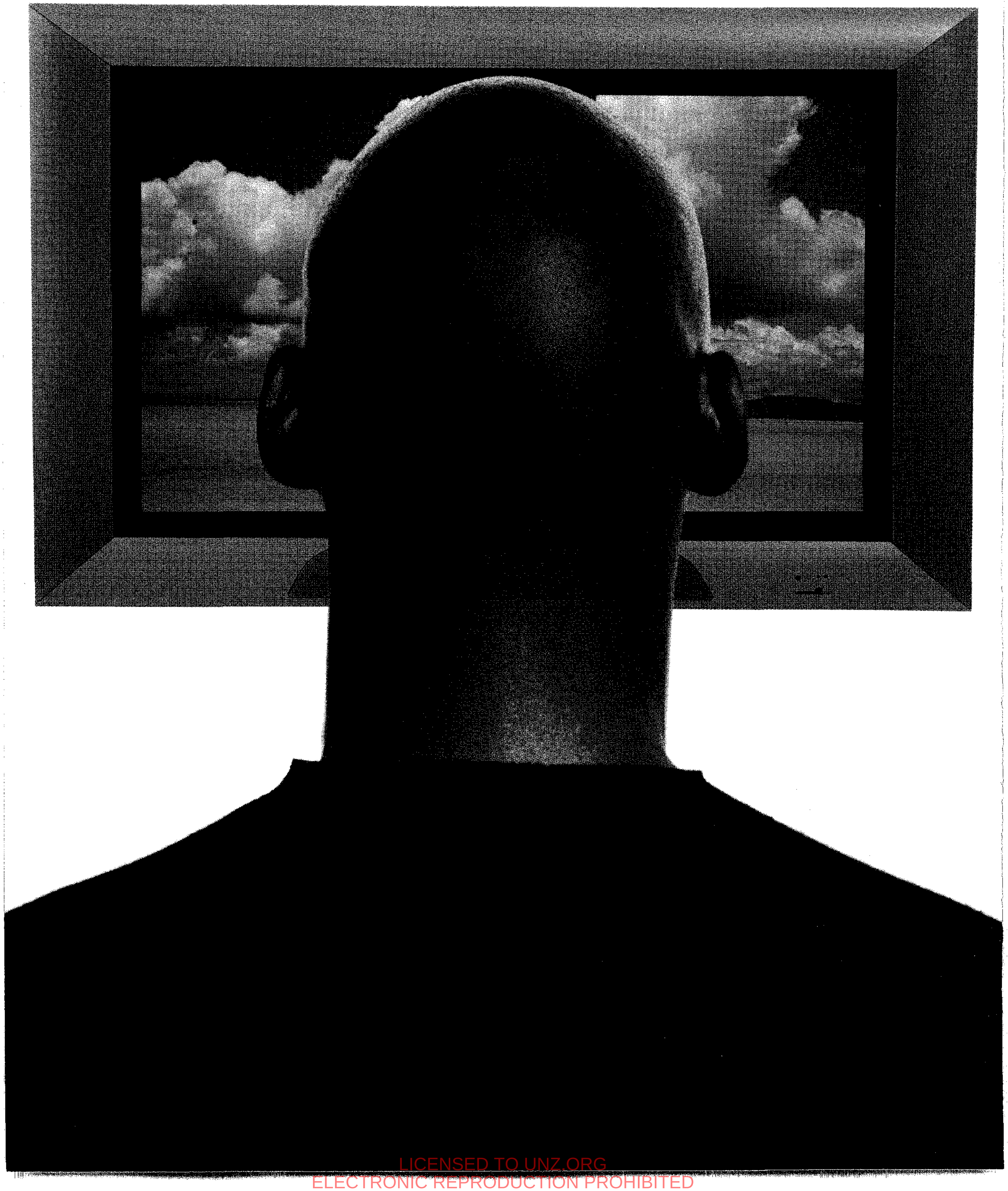

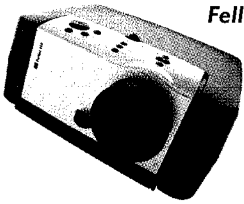

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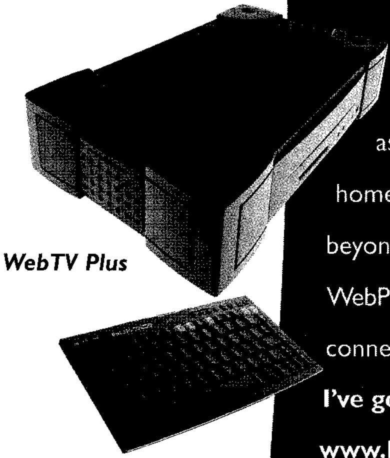

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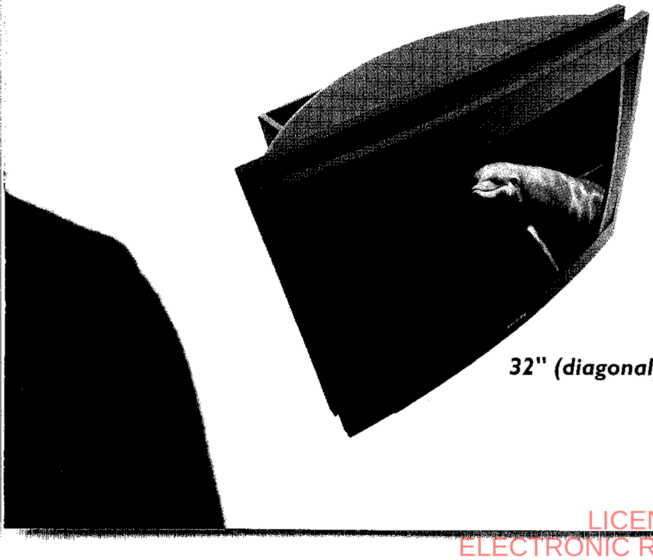

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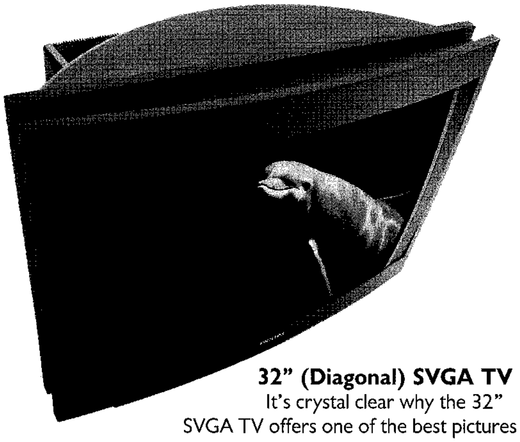

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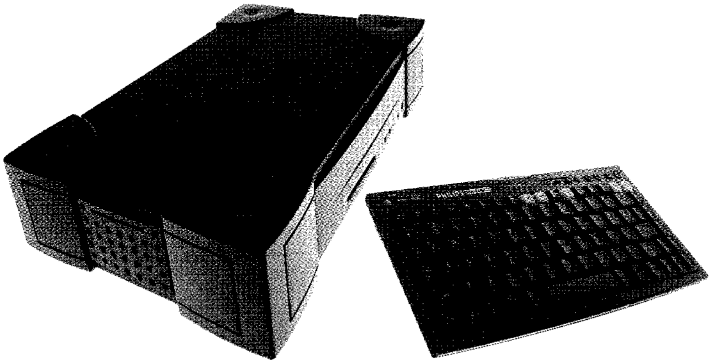

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Romanian border. Again, I came upon the ravishing landscape of my homeland. Only then did the feeling that I had been at my mother's grave grip me. I am sixty-six years old—twice her age when she died. The thought that she would always remain young and beautiful and I would grow old alongside her youth filled me with pain and wonder.

Until recently, I had thought that there existed a childhood home far from me and another childhood home within me. Now I know: what there was dwells only within me. Outside is an alien land, like my village, which has uprooted the memory of the common life of the past hundred and fifty years without leaving a trace. The synagogue in that village had been erased, and not even a small marker in memory of the slaughtered had been erected. The silent peasants who gathered around me would certainly have preferred that I hadn't come. My presence had aroused fear and repugnance. What could I have said to them? That I understood them? That I forgave them? The truth is that I felt neither anger nor the desire for revenge. I had been enveloped in sorrow for my mother's young life. For years, I had tried to draw her up out of the harsh darkness where she lay. I had failed to redeem her from the alien land and from her imprisonment, but I had seen where she was buried and what you can see from there.

A year ago, I had dreamed that I returned to the village. There the headman handed me an upholstered tray with a pendant of my mother's which my father had bought for her in Czernovitz, and which had looked very becoming on her neck. Today, I know that many of my mother's jewels are to be found in the village houses, and certainly quite a few gifts that my father brought to her from Vienna or Prague. Everything was stolen and now lives in captivity.

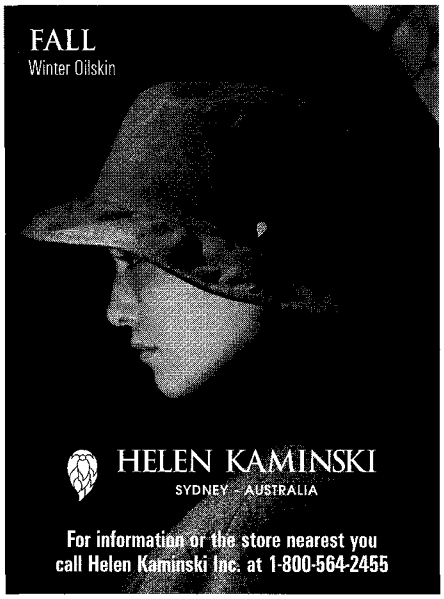
I RETURNED home with a few sentimental drawings of Czernovitz, which I had bought in a department store. They did not reflect the Czernovitz I had seen. There the potential for Jewish tourism had not been developed, as, for example, it has been in Prague. In Czernovitz, the splendid temple of the city is now a place where people watch movies, gamble, and play billiards. Perhaps it's better that way—no counterfeit sentimentality. When I was in Prague a year ago, I saw how the Czechs had made Kafka into a tourist attraction, and I was disgusted. They had stripped his modest life and his secret writing of their clothing, and flashed his portrait on billboards for clubs and restaurants. What do his three sisters, who were murdered in the camps, feel when they see their brother—who was so fanatical about his privacy—exposed so cheaply?

In Czernovitz, there is a monument to the great writer Paul Celan, who lived from 1920 to 1970. Paul Celan is a pseudonym—his real name was Paul Ancel. Like Kafka, he knew both Yiddish and Hebrew. During the Second World War, he was in the camps, and after the war he emigrated to Vienna and then to Paris, where he took his life. His cryptic poetry is certainly his secret, but it is also the collective secret of the Jews of Czernovitz, whose love for the German language and German literature was unbounded. It's no coincidence that a long line of poets in the German language thrived there—among them Rosa Auslander, Moses Rosenkranz, Alfred Margul-Sperber, Alfred Gong, Immanuel Weissglas, and Alfred Kittner. To erect a monument to Celan alone, without mentioning the others—without mentioning the Jews who constituted sixty per cent of the city's residents—is an insult to their memory.

The Hebrew poet Saul Tchernikhovsky wrote, "A person is only the ground of a small land. A person is only the outline of his native landscape." A Jew in Europe was always in exile. Exile is never easy, but it produces a sense of detachment, and detachment has given the Jew the perspective of a high vantage point. It is no coincidence that Jewish writers in Europe have been among the leaders in modern literature—Kafka, Proust, Babel, Schulz, Werfel, Broch, Celan, and others.

This flowering was cut off by the Holocaust. Czernovitz expelled its Jews, and so did Vienna, Prague, Budapest, and Lemberg. Now these cities live without Jews, and their few descendants, scattered through the world, carry memory like a wonderful gift and a relentless curse. For me, too, the childhood home is that "black milk"—to use the expression of Paul Celan—which nourishes me morning and evening while at the same time it drugs me. ♦

(*Translated, from the Hebrew, by Jeffrey M. Green.*)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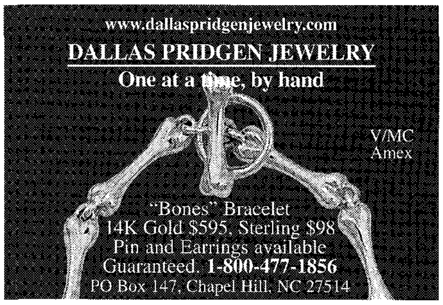
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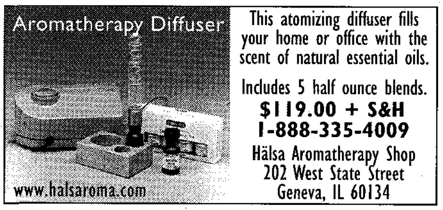
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ANNALS OF FINANCE

THE BRILLIANT BAILOUT

J. P. Morgan's dramatic intervention to prevent an economic meltdown in 1907 is one of the most controversial episodes in the history of finance. A reassessment of the event—and Morgan's actions—suggests that today's unravelling global economy could use his advice.

BY JEAN STROUSE

NINETY-ONE years ago, in the fall of 1907, the world was on the verge of economic collapse. Markets had been wildly unsettled for months. In March, in spite of record corporate earnings, the American stock market had crashed. Prices crumbled, brokerage houses closed, interest rates soared. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost nearly twenty-five per cent of its value in three months, falling from a high of 96 to a low of 75. The City of San Francisco couldn't float a loan in New York that spring, and the Egyptian Stock Exchange crashed. The Bank of England sent three million dollars in gold to Alexandria to stop the slide, then found itself short of cash. As stocks plummeted on the Tokyo Exchange, banks failed all over Japan. French investors sold American stocks to buy gold and ship it home, which depleted United States reserves. In mid-August, the American stock market plunged again. The New York *Times* estimated the losses at a billion dollars.

The United States had no central bank to deal with this crisis, and the Treasury Secretary did not have the experience or the authority to stop the accelerating panic. One private banker did. In October, J. P. Morgan summoned New York's major financiers to his library on East Thirty-sixth Street. For two harrowing weeks, he raised money for desperate markets and shored up shaky institutions. In November, the panic subsided.

Morgan's dramatic handling of the 1907 crisis is one of the most famous and controversial episodes in the history of finance. Market experts regard it as the work of a clearheaded master who grasped the big picture and took decisive action, but off Wall Street it has been seen as yet another example of rich people manipulating events for their own profit. At the time, critics accused Morgan of having deliberately caused the panic, of snatching up vulnerable rivals at fire-sale prices, of using his mysterious expertise to ruin widows and orphans. Both readings of this man—brilliant financial statesman and rapacious robber baron—have persisted throughout the century.

Economic analysts as diverse as Walter Lippmann, John Maynard Keynes, and Milton Friedman agree that modern financial markets cannot fully regulate themselves and that the crises which occur periodically require some kind of external intervention. Nonetheless, interventions tend to be unpopular, on the political right because they involve tinkering with the sovereign free market, and on the liberal left because of deep-rooted democratic suspicions about Wall Street's power, motives, and greed. Last month, when Alan Greenspan testified before a congressional committee about the deal brokered by the Federal Reserve to buy time for Long-Term Capital Management—the hedge fund that had made the wrong bets with hundreds of billions of borrowed dollars—he explained that the failure of L.T.C.M. could have caused massive damage to the U.S. economy and rippled disastrously through already fragile international markets. Responding to skeptical questions, Greenspan cited the precedent set by Morgan in 1907, and pointed out that such interventions are "rare occasions" and are warranted only by the potential for widespread economic disruption.

The failure of the Federal Reserve to take the right corrective action in 1929 proved catastrophic. Today, the absence of competent financial leadership is crippling Asia and Russia, and the turmoil set off by trouble there threatens to engulf the rest of the world. The Fed's recent actions have for the moment given U.S. markets a breather, which has helped calm the global panic. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin continues to warn, however, that we are facing "the most serious international financial disruption of the last fifty years." Whether he, Greenspan, the Group of Seven, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank can guide the world out of this crisis remains to be seen.

ALTHOUGH J. Pierpont Morgan is often cast as the high priest of modern capitalism, he didn't really believe in free markets. He spent most of his adult life trying to stabilize the chaotic U.S. economy, curb speculative profiteers, and bring the market's destructive forces under control. Still, he came to stand for everything Americans hate and fear about the power of Wall Street. He played a prominent role in the country's transformation from a rural, agrarian society to a modern industrial state—a transformation many people bitterly opposed. He worked in a period of unprecedented financial and political corruption that brought on a national shudder of disgust. And he was so convinced of his own patriotism and rectitude that he never courted public favor.

His critics have always been more persuasive than his champions. They tend to be better speakers and writers, they reflect popular American assumptions about the robber-baron chapter of our history, and their bracing hostility gives the story force. In 1910, Robert M. La Follette, the Republican senator from Wisconsin, described Morgan as a "thick-necked financial bully, drunk with wealth and power, [who] bawls his orders to stock markets, Directors, courts, Governments, and Nations." Sixty-five years later, E. L. Doctorow, in his novel "Rag-

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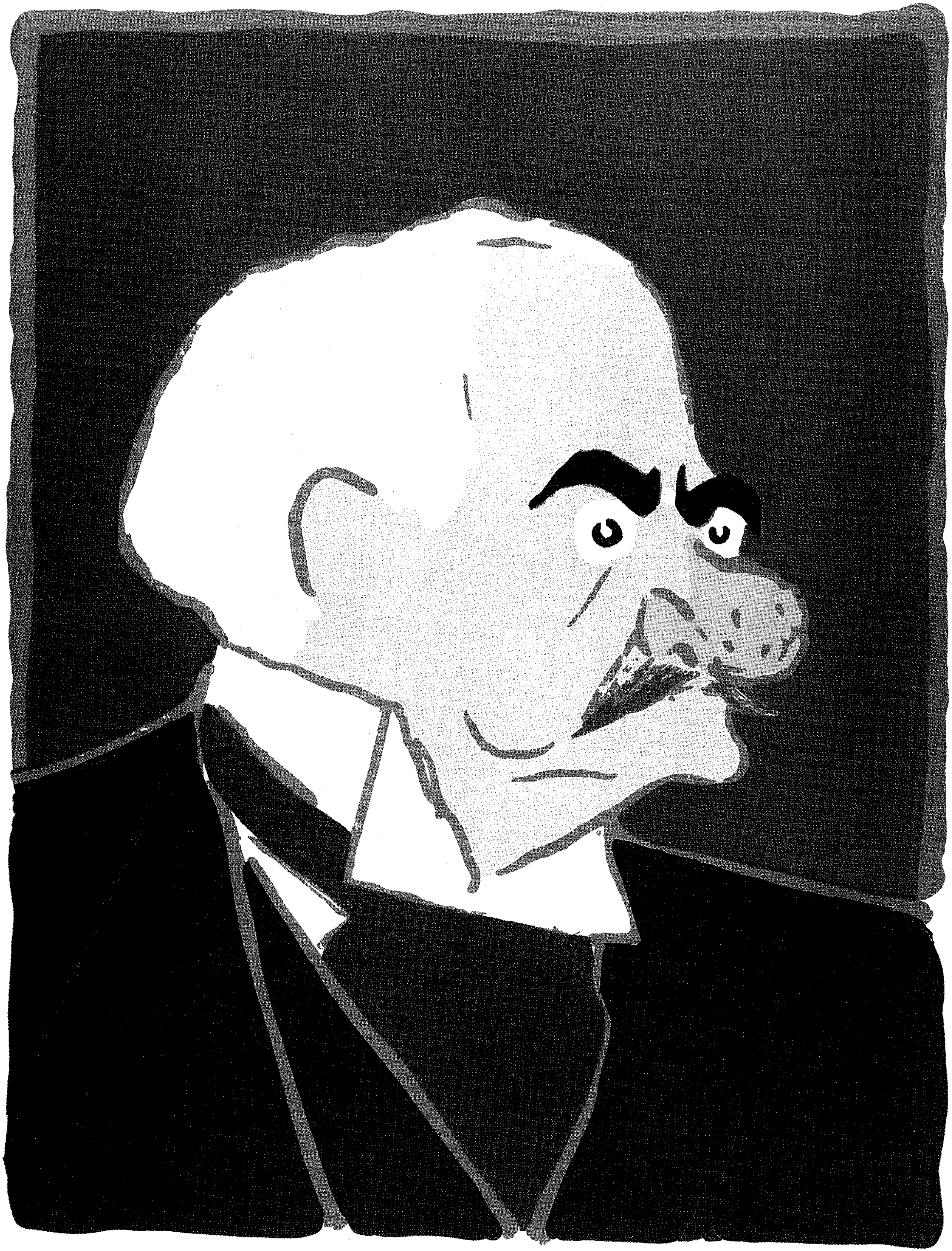


J. Pierpont Morgan was either a voracious robber baron or the man who single-handedly saved the nation.

time," said much the same thing, portraying Morgan as "a burly six-footer with a large head of sparse white hair, a white moustache and fierce intolerant eyes set just close enough to suggest the psychopathology of his will."

A few years after the 1907 panic, Walter Lippmann observed that the muckraking exposés of the Progressive era had tapped into deep and legitimate dissatisfactions; otherwise, a "land notorious for its worship of success would not have turned so savagely upon those who had achieved it." Still, Lippmann mocked the "sense of conspiracy and secret scheming" in which "'Big Business,' and its ruthless tentacles, have become the material for the feverish fantasy" of people whose lives had been radically altered by economic change: "All the frictions of life are readily ascribed to a deliberate evil intelligence, and men like Morgan and Rockefeller take on attributes of omnipotence, that ten minutes of cold sanity would reduce to a barbarous myth."

...E OF THE BUILDING
FREDK SOUTHACK
...WYN BALL JR
AGENTS

During the terrifying financial crisis in the fall of 1907, desperate depositors lined up to get their money out of failing

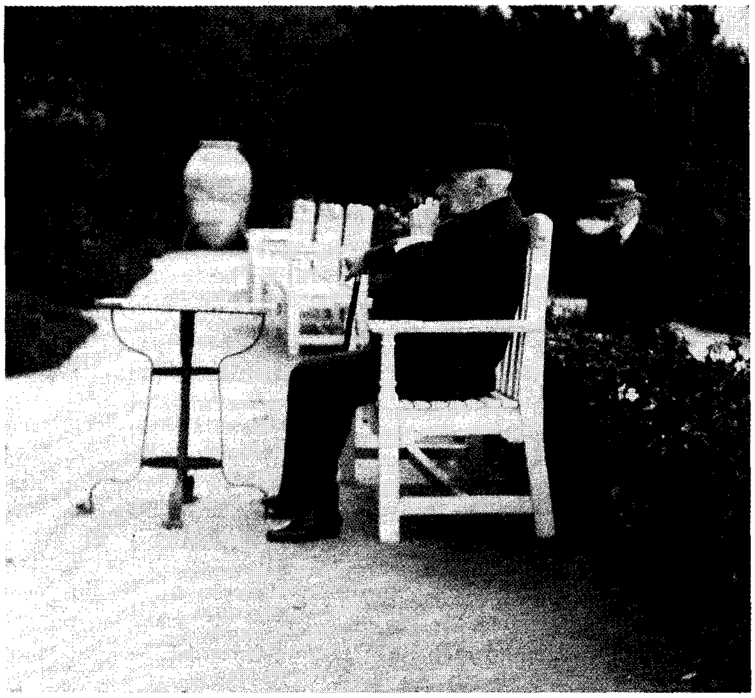
BROWN BROTHERS; CORBIS-BETTMANN; ARCHIVES OF THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

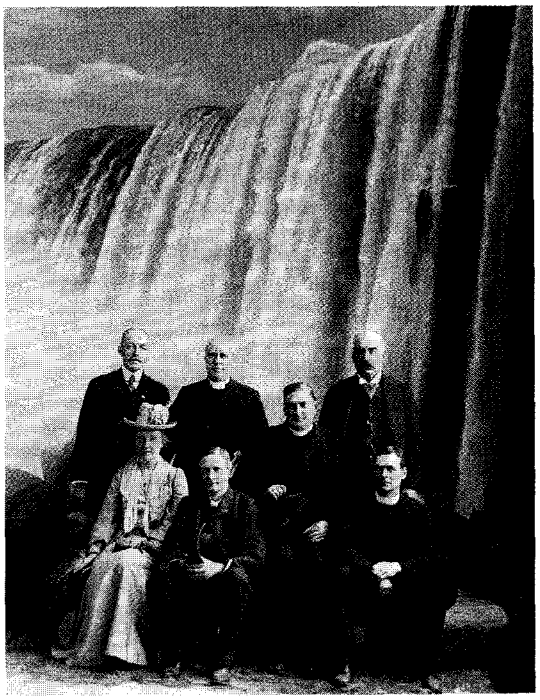
Pierpont Morgan (he never used his first name, John) was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1837. His ancestors on both sides had come to America before the Revolution. He grew up in Hartford and Boston; moved to London in 1854, when his father, Junius, joined an Anglo-American merchant bank; and was educated in Switzerland and Germany. By the time he started work in New York, at the age of twenty, he was fluent in French and German, familiar with Europe's great museums and art collections, and an avid student of world finance. When he was twenty-four, he married a lovely, intelligent young woman named Amelia Sturges, but she died four months later, of tuberculosis. In some ways, he never got over the loss. He married again, in 1865, and with his second wife, the former Frances Louisa Tracy, had four children—Louisa, J. P. Morgan, Jr. (Jack), Juliet, and Anne.

Like the emerging economies of the late twentieth century, America in the middle of the nineteenth needed much more capital than it could generate on its own, but European investors who had been cheated by American hucksters or badly hurt in U.S. depressions were not about to send more money across the Atlantic without some guarantee that it would be safe. The Morgans provided that guarantee. From affiliated banking houses in London and New York, Junius and Pierpont made it their business to certify which U.S. properties were "sound," and investors on both sides of the Atlantic gradually learned to trust the Morgan name on an issue of stocks or bonds.

In the eighteen-fifties, Junius raised money for the transatlantic cable; twenty years later, he helped fund the young Andrew Carnegie; in 1878, as Thomas Edison began to experiment with electric light, Pierpont organized a group of financiers to back him. In addition to making smart choices, the Morgans acted as financial disciplinarians. Their clients, largely foreign at first, were putting up money primarily to build railroads, which were enormously expensive, and when things went wrong with one of the "Morgan" companies Pierpont fired the managers, restructured the finances, and appointed a board of trustees to supervise its affairs until things went right. His power came not from his wealth—he didn't make nearly as much money as he could have, if that had been his primary aim—but from a record that led other bankers and industrialists to trust him.

After the Civil War, in the period that came to be known, in Mark Twain's sardonic phrase, as the Gilded Age, many Americans got immensely rich. U.S. national income tripled between 1870 and 1900, and the size of individual fortunes soared. By the end of the eighteen-eighties, Pierpont and Junius Morgan together were probably worth about twenty-five million dollars: a lot of money when eighty per cent of American families earned less than five hundred dollars a year, but nothing like the major fortunes of the time. William Henry Vanderbilt left an estate worth two hundred million dollars when he died, in 1885; John D. Rockefeller, by 1892, had a net worth estimated at more than eight hundred million dollars (roughly twelve billion in nineteen-nineties dollars).





banks. J. P. Morgan (posing with Episcopal clergy at right) hurried back from a church convention to take charge.

The tremendous new concentration of private affluence had unsettling effects not only on the vast majority of Americans who were not rich but also on the nation's Old Guard élites. Boston's Brahmins, New York's Knickerbockers, and the residents of Philadelphia's Main Line still had ample bank accounts, but wealth in previously unimaginable amounts belonged to the "new" men. Pierpont Morgan occupied an unusual place on this shifting social ground, since he qualified for membership in both the old and the new élites: he came from an eminent American family, but his professional drive and growing fortune were more characteristic of the arrivistes. Few men his age who assumed patrician status as a birthright spent their days trying to curb railroad wars or market government bonds.

And few of them played as wide-ranging a role in the growth of America's artistic and educational institutions as Morgan did in the last decades of the nineteenth century. He helped found and/or fund the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Madison Square Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Botanical Garden, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and the American Academy in Rome. He gave a million dollars to the Harvard Medical School and hundreds of thousands to the Episcopal Church.

Brusque, publicity-shy, and neither introspective nor articulate, Morgan had no coherent philosophy and never explained his decisions. After a dinner in his honor in Chicago, the *Tribune* ran the headline "MONEY TALKS BUT MORGAN DOESN'T." On the mantel in his private study, he kept a white enamel plaque that read, in blue Provençal script, "*Pense moult, parle peu, écris rien.*" ("Think a lot, say little, write nothing.") Asked why he had merged a group of railroads or bought a controlling interest in an insurance company, he would say, "I thought it was the thing to do"—at once shutting out inquisitors, displaying Olympian self-assurance, and telling the partial (in both senses of the word) truth. He was, as Henry Adams said of Theodore Roosevelt, "pure act."

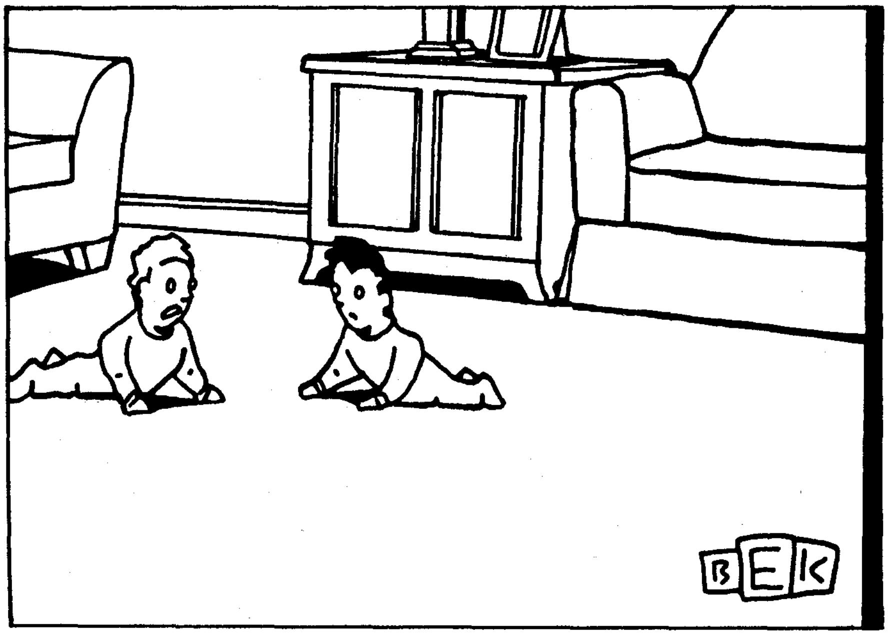
Morgan had begun to collect art in his twenties—mostly conventional academic genre paintings—but in his fifties he turned to rare books, illuminated manuscripts, Renaissance bronzes, and the work of Old Masters. After the turn of the century, he spent six months a year abroad, adding to his collections. The scope of his 1901 acquisitions prompted one of his British partners to wire the New York office—referring to Morgan in code—"I hope, though we cannot hint it, that Flitch will not buy the National Gallery at the end of the year." The following summer, the same partner complained, "We never see him & it is difficult to get hold of him. He spends his time lunching with Kings or Kaisers or buying Raphaels." To house his rare-book and manuscript collections, Morgan commissioned Charles McKim to build a private library next to his brownstone on Madison Avenue at Thirty-sixth Street, and once the building was finished he went so rarely to his Wall Street office that his partners christened the library "the Up-Town Branch."

By 1907, Morgan had been acting as America's unofficial central banker for thirty years. Andrew Jackson had terminally crippled the Second Bank of the United States in 1836, a year before Morgan was born, and Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Reserve System into law in 1913, a few months after Morgan died. Between 1836 and 1913, the United States had no effective way to regulate the supply of money and credit, no official lender of last resort, no federal recourse in times of inflation, depression, panic, or crash. The booming American economy went through a new financial crisis every ten or twenty years—in 1819, '37, '57, '73, '84, and '93. John Kenneth Galbraith has noted that the intervals between panics corresponded "roughly with the time it took people to forget the last disaster."

After the panic of 1893, Morgan spent most of the decade reorganizing bankrupt railroad and industrial companies. When the federal government all but ran out of gold in 1895, he raised sixty-five million dollars and made sure it stayed in the Treasury's coffers. That feat was particularly admired by European bankers and statesmen, since it kept the U.S. (which was still an emerging economy—we remained net debtors until 1914) from reneging on its debt. Had the country defaulted or gone off the international gold standard in 1895, the flight of foreign capital would have looked like the withdrawal of money from Russia in the summer of 1998. As it was, in the early eighteen-nineties European investors, anticipating the U.S. currency crisis, sold off four hundred million dollars' worth of American assets and shipped gold home.

Morgan's high-profile defense of the gold standard during the depression of the nineties helped establish his enduring image as a ruthless predator robbing America's farmers and workers to line his own pockets. Tying the dollar to gold was hugely unpopular in the anguished South and West, where farmers, workers, small businessmen, and other borrowers were desperate for easier money simply to survive. Each side in this painful struggle was, from its own perspective, right. Devaluing the currency would have eased the suffering of those hit hardest by the long contraction, but it would also have further damaged U.S. credit in international markets and prolonged the depression, since foreign investors would keep taking money out as the value of their dollar assets declined.

Morgan was looking not to torment America's farmers but to maintain the flow of capital from Europe. Intent on establishing economic stability, he took personal responsibility for supporting the dollar's value and coaxing economic adversaries to the bargaining table—workers and managers as well as warring railroad and steel barons—while urging Washington to modernize America's antebellum banking system. Between 1890 and 1910, he reorganized bankrupt railroads (the process came to be known as Morganization), put together the world's first billion-dollar corporation (U.S. Steel), and had a hand in setting up International Harvester and General Electric—all on the principle that the combination of rival interests into huge, rational systems was preferable to the boom-and-bust cycles, price wars, and speculative recklessness of internecine competition. But what he saw as healthy rational systems most of the country regarded as sinister monopolies, or "trusts."



"I'm hoping things will turn around. I just signed with a hot new day-care center."

DURING the first economic contraction of the twentieth century, in 1903, Morgan began plans for a fifty-million-dollar bankers' reserve fund in anticipation of a crisis. It wasn't needed, and productivity surged back to drive the Dow Jones Industrial Average from a low of 42 in November of 1903 to 103 in 1906. The growth spurt created an enormous demand for capital, but world gold production had not kept pace with industrial output, and money everywhere, pegged to gold, was scarce. Recent wars had absorbed Western cash reserves, foreign governments had raised their interest rates, and the United States was facing an acute liquidity crisis. At the beginning of 1906, Jacob Schiff, the head of the investment firm Kuhn, Loeb, warned that "if the currency conditions of this country are not changed materially . . . you will have such a panic . . . as will make all previous panics look like child's play."

Theodore Roosevelt—the first President since Lincoln whose stature was commensurate with the office—had cheerfully played both sides of the street in his relations with big business. He made his reputation as a "trustbuster" by prosecuting one of Morgan's largest railroad consolidations shortly after taking office, in 1902, then worked closely with the Morgan bank as he tried to define a new relationship between strong government and corporate America. Woodrow Wilson, the president of Princeton, attributed the country's economic troubles to the government's "aggressive attitude toward the railroads, that made it impossible for them to borrow." Much of the business community held a similar view at the time, and urged Roosevelt to ease up on regulatory measures and antitrust prosecutions. Instead, T.R. threatened at the end of 1906 to subject all large trusts to federal control, and declared that Americans were enjoying "a literally unprecedented prosperity."

In March of 1907, Morgan, who was then nearly seventy years old and semi-retired, was about to leave on his annual spring trip to Europe when the combination of monetary shrinkage and a rumor that Roosevelt was about to make a new move against the railroads prompted him to pay a call on the President. In

"Get me my gun. I want to squeeze off a few last rounds."

Washington on March 11th, the two men spent two hours discussing the situation. As he left the White House, Morgan told the press that Roosevelt would meet with the heads of leading railroads to see what might be done to "allay public anxiety."

On March 14th, the day after Morgan sailed for Europe, the stock market crashed. Roosevelt called off his meeting with the railroad men. Morgan's New York partners cabled their London colleagues that the "underlying cause" of the "enormous drop" was impossible to discern. Morgan remained abroad for five months. The worldwide credit shortage did not ease and damaged markets everywhere. Over the summer, large new bond offerings for Westinghouse and the Cities of Boston and New York failed to sell. New York's Metropolitan Traction Company and a major iron-manufacturing firm went bankrupt. In August, shortly after the American stock market fell again, Morgan sailed for home.

He was worried primarily about liquidity. America's obsolete banking system was like an immense tangle of dry brush and timber waiting for a spark, and the worst crises always came in the fall, when rural banks drew money out of New York to meet agricultural demand. There were in 1907 more than twenty-one thousand state and national banks across the country, with no coördinated management or pool of common reserves. Most of them loaned their surpluses to correspondent banks in New York, the national money center, and the New Yorkers loaned the money out to the Stock Exchange, individuals, and businesses. Banks beyond the Hudson could call in their loans at a moment's notice, however, and New York's big national banks, which were required to keep twenty-five per cent of their deposits in cash, would not possibly be able to meet demand if all of their correspondents suddenly demanded their money at once.

The weakest institutions in the system were trust companies chartered by the states to handle individual trust funds, wills, and estates. Not to be confused with the huge corporations like U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, and American Tobacco, which were commonly known as trusts, the trust companies operated like commercial banks, accepting deposits, issuing loans, and financing speculative ventures, but they had minimal regulatory supervision.

• •

At the beginning of October, shortly after Morgan returned from Europe, he was attending the Triennial Convention of the Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, when an attempt by two speculators to corner the stock in a copper company failed, bankrupting a mining concern, two brokerage houses, and a bank. The speculators had induced several New York trust companies—including the Knickerbocker Trust, headed by a Morgan acquaintance, Charles T. Barney—to fund their venture. As reports of Barney's involvement in the copper scheme swept through New York, terrified Knickerbocker depositors began drawing their money out.

Morgan's partners kept him posted on the situation by messenger and wire, but insisted that he not come back to New York early, since a sudden change in his plans would increase the sense of panic. By this time, he could not cross the street without arousing speculation in the stock market and the press.

The Richmond convention ended Saturday afternoon, October 19th. Morgan left by train for New York, arriving early Sunday morning, and went straight to his library, where his partners were waiting. He smoked cigars as they filled him in. The Knickerbocker depositors' demands had been met for two days with help from the second-largest bank in the country, the National Bank of Commerce, but the run was likely to resume on Monday and the panic was certain to spread. Stocks were broadly down and cash was in short supply.

As soon as word got out that Morgan had returned to New York, reporters stationed themselves outside the library. Bankers and government officials dropped by all Sunday afternoon and evening as

STORY TEMPLATE
Once upon a time.
Suddenly.
Luckily.
ACME
Happily ever after.

the old man marshalled information and resources. Roosevelt, oblivious of the impending crisis, was hunting in the Louisiana canebrakes. He told a reporter on Sunday, "We got three bears, six deer, one wild turkey, twelve squirrels, one duck, one opossum, and one wildcat. We ate them all, except the wildcat."

In New York that night, Morgan lined up two groups of men. The first consisted of himself, his friend George F. Baker, president of the First National Bank, and James Stillman, president of the largest bank in the country, National City—known as "the Rockefeller bank" because of its close association with Standard Oil. (First National and National City merged in 1955 and eventually became Citibank.) Morgan, Baker, and Stillman would form a high command to review information and raise and allocate money as the country's provisional lender of last resort. The second group was made up of younger men: Morgan's partner George Perkins; Henry P. Davison, a protégé of Baker's and a vice-president at First National; and Benjamin Strong, the secretary of Bankers Trust, who was recommended by Davison. These six men would try to ascertain which trust companies were hopelessly overextended and should be allowed to fail, and which were essentially healthy and could be saved. Somehow they had to find ways to supply liquidity where it would do the most good. Late Sunday night, other New York financiers pledged to support any plan Morgan might devise.

It was after midnight by the time the meetings at the library broke up. Morgan's wife, Fanny, and his daughter Anne had recently returned from Europe and were at Cragston, the family's summer house in the Hudson River Valley, just below West Point. Since his town house was closed in October for cleaning, Morgan was staying with his elder daughter, Louisa Satterlee, at 37 East Thirty-sixth Street. His son, Jack, now forty years old, was in London.

On Monday, October 21st, Morgan held a strategy session over breakfast with George Perkins, then headed down to J. P. Morgan & Company, at 23 Wall Street. The pressure on the Knickerbocker Trust had increased: the company had sixty million dollars on deposit but just ten million in cash. Its directors told Morgan that afternoon that they had forced Charles Barney to resign but were afraid this news would accelerate the panic. While they talked, word came in that the National Bank of Commerce, which cleared transactions for the Knickerbocker, would no longer do so—a decisive vote of no confidence. The Morgan and Knickerbocker people conferred all afternoon and evening, moving from the Morgan bank to the library to a private dining room at Louis Sherry's restaurant. They adjourned at 2 A.M., with no plan except that the Knickerbocker would open in the morning, and that Henry Davison and Ben Strong would examine its books: if the younger men judged it financially sound, Morgan would find money to keep it afloat.

Long lines formed outside the Knickerbocker Trust, at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street, overnight. Early Tuesday morning, as Morgan's lieutenants pored over accounts in a back office, depositors clamored for information and cash. The streets of the financial district "reflected the panicky feeling indoors, in the worried faces and the unusual crowds of hurrying men," the *Times* reported. By twelve-thirty, the Knickerbocker had paid out eight million dollars, and Davison and Strong told Morgan that they needed more time to determine whether it had enough assets to secure a loan. Morgan decided not to intervene, even though he had known Charles Barney for years. At 2 P.M., the Knickerbocker closed its doors.

Treasury Secretary George Cortelyou took the afternoon train to Manhattan as banks around the country withdrew their reserves from New York. Stock prices tumbled. The annual interest rate of money on the Exchange—"call" money loaned briefly by banks to brokers to finance their trades—reached seventy per cent. (At the "money post" on the Exchange floor, banks furnished call loans to brokers for anywhere from a minute to a few days. If a bank suddenly called in its loan, a broker could usually turn around and borrow the same amount from someone else, but in volatile markets interest rates fluctuated wildly according to the money supply.) As Morgan left his office, he told reporters, "We are doing everything we can, as fast as we can, but nothing has yet crystallized."

Late that night, the bankers met with Cortelyou at his hotel, and at 1 A.M. George Perkins announced that a syndicate would furnish money to the healthy trusts. The hardest hit, after the Knickerbocker, had been the Trust Company of America, with assets of a hundred million dollars. Hoping to ease public fears, Perkins promised specifically to buttress the T.C.A., but naming any institution in an atmosphere of panic turned out to be a mistake. The headlines on Wednesday morning, "AID TRUST COMPANY OF AMERICA: J. P. MORGAN IS TO HELP"—spooked the T.C.A.'s depositors, who lined up to get their money out.

MORGAN had come down with a heavy cold, and the Satterlees had trouble waking him up on Wednesday. When they finally succeeded, he had no voice and seemed to be in a stupor. His physician came and dosed him with lozenges, gargles, and sprays. On arriving, late, at 23 Wall Street, he found E. H. Harriman, Henry Clay Frick, and Thomas Fortune Ryan waiting to ask him how to stop the spreading disaster. He said he did not yet know. At 1 P.M., he learned that the T.C.A. had only $1.2 million in cash left. Without a loan, it could not stay open until closing time, at three o'clock.

A few minutes after one, Ben Strong came in with a preliminary report on the T.C.A. finances. He and Davison had been studying the accounts since four in the morning. Morgan said little as Strong presented his findings. Strong later recalled that the old man wanted no details, just general facts and results. Several times he asked, "Are they solvent?" Strong replied that the T.C.A. surplus was gone, but its assets were more or less intact.

Would the bankers be justified in seeing this company through? Morgan wanted to know.

Strong said he thought that they would.

Morgan turned to Baker and Stillman: "This is the place to stop the trouble, then."

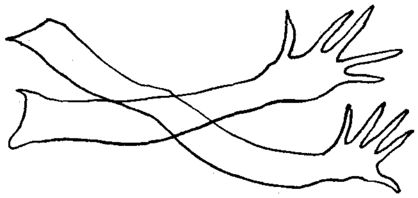
Morgan asked Oakleigh Thorne, the head of the T.C.A., to bring him securities that the company had accepted as collateral for loans. By two-fifteen, the T.C.A. had only a hundred and eighty thousand dollars in cash on hand, and its employees were trooping into 23 Wall Street with leather boxes and sacks full of certificates. Morgan, Strong, and Thorne sat down around a big table to add up the value of the stocks and bonds. James Stillman got on the phone to his bank. Morgan, coughing and sneezing, took notes on a pad, and as soon as he had enough collateral for an advance told Stillman to send that amount around to the T.C.A. offices. By three o'clock, about three million dollars had been delivered and the Trust Company of America had, for the moment, survived.

Ben Strong spent the rest of that day and night confirming his appraisal of the T.C.A.'s assets. The company was not yet in the clear, and other institutions were getting clobbered. Westinghouse had gone into receivership, a run had started on the Lincoln Trust Company, and the Pittsburgh Stock Exchange had suspended trading—which would probably precipitate a stock-market panic in New York. The interest rate on call money had risen to ninety per cent.

Morgan summoned the presidents of the trust companies late that night to the Union Trust, on Fifth Avenue at Thirty-eighth Street, and asked them to come up with ten million dollars for the T.C.A. the next day. The presidents talked. Nothing happened. Sick and worn out, Morgan fell asleep in his chair, cigar in hand. When he woke up after half an hour, he asked Ben Strong for a pencil and paper. He went around the room insisting on pledges from one man after another until he had $8.25 million. He committed the commercial banks to make up the rest, and left with Stillman to see Cortelyou. The Treasury Secretary arranged for the government to deposit twenty-five million dollars in New York. Headlines on Thursday morning announced that "CORTELYOU PUTS IN $25 MILLION," and that Morgan's "bank league" would prop up the trusts. As Morgan drove down to his office at 10 A.M., people shouted, "There goes the Old Man!" and "There goes the Big Chief!" He pretended not to notice, his son-in-law and biographer, Herbert Satterlee, wrote later, "but it was evident that he was pleased."

John D. Rockefeller provided ten million dollars to support the trust companies on Thursday, but the panic had spread to the Stock Exchange. Financial institutions calling in loans were choking off the market's money supply, and by 12:30 P.M. cash was so scarce that the call rate reached a hundred per cent. Morgan telephoned the presidents of New York's major commercial banks, and by two o'clock they had gathered in his office. He said that he needed twenty-five million dollars to lend to the Exchange or fifty brokerage houses would fail. Stillman pledged five million from the National City Bank. Minutes later, Morgan had $23.5 million. He sent this news to the Exchange floor, and euphoric traders took up almost nineteen million dollars in half an hour. "The rebound was instantaneous," the *Times* reported.

Thursday had been the fourth straight day of panic. As the hysteria spread, banks across the country stepped up their withdrawals from New York, and by noon on Friday the call-money rate had soared to a hundred and fifty per cent. Morgan gathered the commercial bankers at the New York Clearing House and raised another eleven million to be loaned to the Exchange. He marched back to his office to notify the floor: "With his coat unbuttoned and flying open, a piece of white paper clutched tightly in his right hand, he walked fast down Nassau Street," Satterlee recalled. "His flat-topped black derby hat was set firmly down on his head. Between his teeth he held a paper cigar holder in which was one of his long cigars, half smoked. His eyes were fixed straight ahead. He swung his arms as he walked and took no notice of anyone. He did not seem to see the throngs in the street, so intent was his mind on the thing that he was doing. . . . He simply barged along, as if he had been the only man going down the Nassau Street hill past the Subtreasury. . . . Not more than two minutes after he disappeared into his office, the cheering on the floor of the Stock Exchange could be heard out in Broad Street." As Morgan left his office late that afternoon, he told reporters that if people would leave their money in the banks everything would be all right.



THE Stock Exchange had weathered the siege, and most of the trusts were still open. No money would be loaned over the weekend. Before the Morgan teams took a recess, however, they set up a public-relations committee to give out encouraging information to the press, and a spiritual-relations committee that urged city clergymen to counsel calm. In London, Lord Rothschild praised "the unselfish remedial action of Mr. Morgan." Jacob Schiff told an English friend that no one else "could have got the banks to act together, and to join hands in the work, as [Morgan] did, in his autocratic way." Saturday's newspapers reported that five million dollars in gold would be sent from London, that confidence had returned to the French Bourse, "owing to the belief that the strong men in American finance would succeed in their efforts to check the panic," and that "J. P. Morgan has a cold."

Morgan, who had not had more than five hours' sleep any night that week, took a Saturday-afternoon train up the Hudson to Cragston, and slept most of the way. "Very quiet evening," his wife wrote in her diary. "[Pierpont] says he feels that the end of the trouble has come." From pulpits throughout the city on Sunday, religious leaders told people not to panic.

President Roosevelt had remained on the sidelines. In Nashville on Tuesday, he insisted that his policies had not caused the panic, and promised to pursue them "unswervingly." After he returned to Washington Wednesday night, he changed his tune. He sent Cortelyou a letter designed for publication—the newspapers printed it on Sunday—congratulating the Secretary and "those conservative and substantial business men who in this crisis have acted with such wisdom and public spirit." The fundamentals of the American economy were essentially sound, the President said, and the actions taken in New York to check the panic should "produce entire confidence in our business conditions."

Late Sunday afternoon, Morgan returned to the city. George Perkins cabled Jack Morgan in London: "Believe we have the situation well in hand. All well here, but very shy on sleep."

By Monday, nearly twenty million dollars of European gold had left for New York, but the bankers did not in fact have the situation in hand. The next domino to totter was New York City. Mayor George B. McClellan (son of the Civil War general) came to see Morgan, Baker, and Stillman on Monday afternoon. The city needed thirty million dollars to meet its payroll and interest obligations, he said, and there was no money to borrow. Without help, New York would be bankrupt by the end of the week. Morgan put together a syndicate to take thirty million dollars in municipal-revenue bonds paying six per cent, and New York did not default.

For the rest of the week, the battle-fatigued Morgan troops continued to support the trusts, plug holes in the banking system with cash, scan the financial horizon for more signs of trouble, and try to steady shattered nerves. When one banker reported that he was worried because his reserve had dipped below the legal limit, Morgan snapped, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to be anywhere near your legal reserve. What is your reserve for at a time like this except to use?"

MORGAN'S men met at the library every day and issued optimistic reports each night, but on Friday, November 1st, the probable failure of a brokerage house called Moore & Schley threatened to set off a new round of panic. This firm, which for years was the largest brokerage on Wall Street, had played a leading role in the promotion of industrial mergers between 1898 and 1902. In the fall of 1907, Moore & Schley owed about thirty-five million dollars to banks in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York. Among the securities it had used to guarantee its loans were shares of the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company, an independent steel producer based in Birmingham, Alabama. The brokerage house did not actually own this stock. Grant Schley, the head of the firm, had organized two syndicates in 1905-06 to buy a controlling interest in T.C. & I. Moore & Schley had loaned money to members of both syndicates, taking T.C. & I. stock as collateral, and then pledged the shares again to secure its own bank loans. A prominent member of one of the syndicates was the notorious John W. Gates, a burly man with a bullet-shaped head who had allegedly once bet a thousand dollars on which of two raindrops would reach the bottom of a windowpane first. Bet-a-Million Gates controlled Republic Iron & Steel in Birmingham, and was hoping to build a steel empire in the South.

What happened with T.C. & I. in 1907 provoked more controversy than any other aspect of the panic, and became the subject of congressional investigations in 1909 and 1911. Witnesses gave testimony at the second hearing that directly contradicted what they had said at the first, and made statements that bore no relation to facts recorded at the time. There has been so much dispute about these events, and so many conflicting retrospective claims on all sides, that it is nearly impossible to reconstruct the complete story.

The problem in late October of 1907 had to do at first not with Moore & Schley but with Grant Schley himself and another T.C. & I. shareholder, a wine merchant named George Kessler. Both had been speculating in T.C. & I. stock and using the shares as collateral for large loans. Kessler was vastly overextended, with accounts at ten different houses. To bail himself out earlier in the year, he had tried to interest U.S. Steel in buying his T.C. & I. stock for a hundred and thirty dollars a share, but the price was thought to be too high. In October, when Kessler's creditors asked him to pay off his loans, he could not come up with cash.

Schley, who was also hugely leveraged in 1907, owed money to his firm, to his friends, and to several banks—about a million dollars to J. P. Morgan & Company, and more than two million to Baker's First National—and he could not cash out on his T.C. & I. shares, either. The banks refused to accept more T.C. & I. stock as collateral that fall, Schley said later, partly because the bankrupt Kessler's "name had been mixed up with it." Another reason was that the estimated market value of the stock, for which some shareholders had paid a hundred and thirty dollars, had fallen to about sixty dollars. At the beginning of the panic, Schley had taken his case to Morgan, who arranged for U.S. Steel to lend him 1.2 million dollars' worth of its own bonds for eighteen months, taking two million dollars' worth of T.C. & I. shares as security.

The loan did not solve Schley's problems, which he had been discussing all along with another T.C. & I. syndicate member, Oliver Hazard Payne, a director of American Tobacco and Standard Oil. On Friday, November 1st, Payne suggested that the syndicate simply "sell the Tennessee Coal & Iron [company] and be done with it." There was, both men agreed, only one potential buyer—U.S. Steel. Accordingly, Schley sent for Lewis Cass Ledyard, who was Payne's lawyer and Morgan's close friend, to open negotiations for the sale of T.C. & I. Ledyard went over the Moore & Schley books and asked Schley what would pull him out. Schley said a hundred dollars a share.

The next morning, Ledyard took this information to Morgan. Kessler had just defaulted, and it looked as though Schley would be next. Having navigated through two straight weeks of crisis, Morgan was determined to forestall further panic, and he thought Schley's failure likely to wreck the incipient recovery. If Schley and his firm went bankrupt and the banks auctioned off their securities, other financial firms would fail as well, returning public confidence would erode, and it would be impossible to raise more money for the still foundering trusts.

Morgan called in Elbert Gary, the chairman of U.S. Steel's board, and Henry Clay Frick, one of its directors. Morgan was also a director. If U.S. Steel bought T.C. & I., he proposed, it could substitute its own highly rated bonds for the unmarketable T.C. & I. stock as collateral at the banks. The bonds would act like money in the market, bank portfolios would not lose value, and Moore & Schley would not need a huge infusion of cash just when it looked as though the trusts were going to require another twenty-five million dollars. Morgan may not have known much about T.C. & I.—by 1907 he was more interested in art than in steel mills—but he thought this trade would work.

Neither Frick nor Gary liked the idea. T.C. & I., as they knew, had high costs and inefficient operations. In 1901, when Morgan and Gary had organized U.S. Steel by consolidating Carnegie Steel with other major steel companies, steamship lines, railroads, and ore lands, they had deliberately left T.C. & I. out of the deal. In 1907, Gary feared that the acqusition would invite prosecution under the Sherman Antitrust Act.

Members of the U.S. Steel finance committee met in Morgan's library for several hours on Saturday, and late that afternoon Gary and Frick called on Schley with two offers: U.S. Steel would either lend the brokers five million dollars or buy the T.C. & I. stock at ninety dollars a share. Schley said no. He needed far more than five million dollars, and his associates would not take less than a hundred dollars a share for the stock.

That night, a Morgan accountant began going over the T.C. & I. books, and on Sunday Schley and his associates tried to impress the bankers with "the value of the property"—its ore and coal reserves. T.C. & I. owned large iron-ore and coal properties in close proximity to its plants, whereas the big Northern steelmakers had to ship raw materials in from distant mines. Not all the Southern acreage was productive, however; the facilities had inadequate water supplies; and the ore was of a lower quality than that of mines in the North. George Perkins noted dryly that T.C. & I. had owned those reserves for twenty years, "but it didn't prevent the stock selling at 30." A Northern steel man appointed chairman of T.C. & I.'s board in 1901 had found "scarcely any of the property that was right, if it was possible for it to be wrong," and had estimated that the company would need twenty-five million dollars to bring it up to Northern standards. T.C. & I.'s outlook had improved in 1906, when the Schley-Gates syndicate installed new management and supplied $6.25 million to modernize the facilities. The company had reported its highest earnings that year—$2,753,160, or about $9.40 per share. The hundred-dollar price Schley was holding out for in late October, 1907, was ten times that—not an unusually high multiple, but it was based on the company's single best year.

Despite the widely understood caveats, U.S. Steel executives apparently concluded that T.C. & I. had enough potential to outweigh its liabilities: it could provide them with significant mineral resources, new productive capacity, and a stronghold in the South. Over the long run, Morganization and large infusions of cash might turn it into

BARRIN
CHENEY

"Maybe you should see a meteorologist about it."

a profitable asset. Early Sunday evening, the finance committee offered to trade about thirty million dollars' worth of U.S. Steel bonds, plus six hundred and thirty thousand dollars in cash, for about thirty million dollars in T.C. & I. stock valued at a hundred dollars a share. Schley accepted these terms, and his associates agreed to the exchange. Gary, however, would not proceed without President Roosevelt's approval. He telephoned the White House on Sunday at 10 P.M. to set up an appointment for the next morning, and took a midnight train to Washington with Frick.

On Saturday, November 2nd—the day the finance committee met at the library to discuss taking over T.C. & I.—Morgan's town house had reopened, and Fanny and Anne moved back to the city. Crisis had followed crisis for two long weeks. Morgan had manufactured liquidity for desperate markets, coming up with funds by persuasion, fiat, threat, and loan, and everyone, from bankers to trust-company presidents, stockbrokers, and account clerks was exhausted.

Henry Davison and Ben Strong had remained on twenty-four-hour research duty as rumors flew around town. On Saturday afternoon, they reported that the Trust Company of America and the Lincoln Trust held mostly solid assets but needed more cash. At nine-thirty Sunday evening, more than fifty men gathered in Morgan's library. One of them later recalled the "anxious throng of bankers, too uneasy to sit down or converse at ease, pacing through the long marble hall and up and down the high-ceilinged rooms," which were filled with Renaissance bronzes, Gutenberg Bibles, and tiers of books. Morgan asked the trust-company presidents to raise another twenty-five million dollars.

Ben Strong, waiting to make a report, fell asleep. When he woke up, James Stillman asked him when he had last been to bed. Not since Thursday night, Strong admitted. Stillman said the country would not collapse if Strong went home, but at that moment Morgan asked for the figures on the Trust Company of America. At 3 A.M., after Strong finished his report, he headed to the library's front doors and found them locked. Morgan had the key in

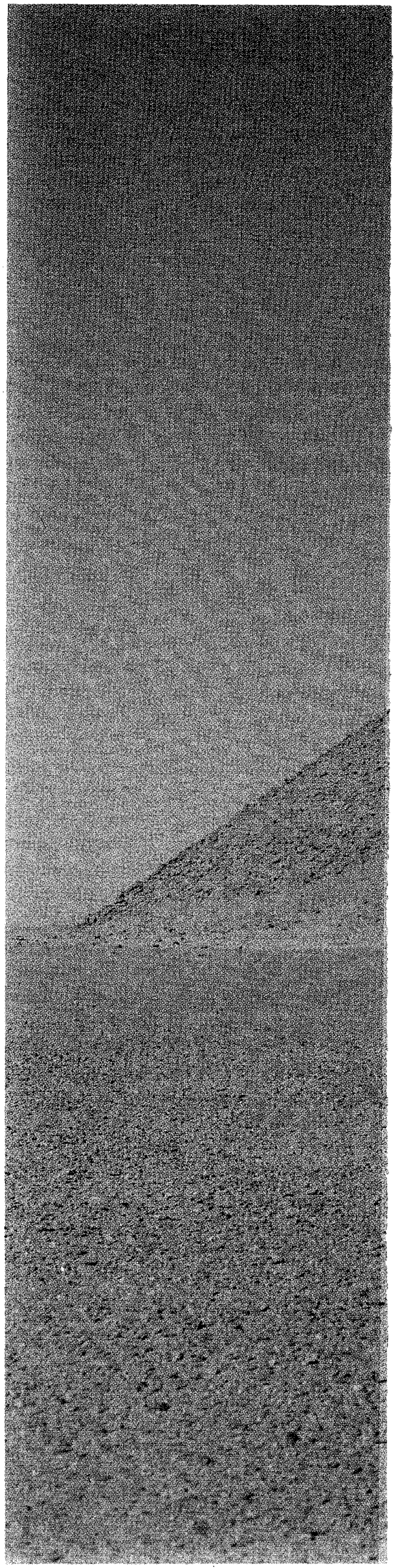
SHOWCASE BY LYNN DAVIS

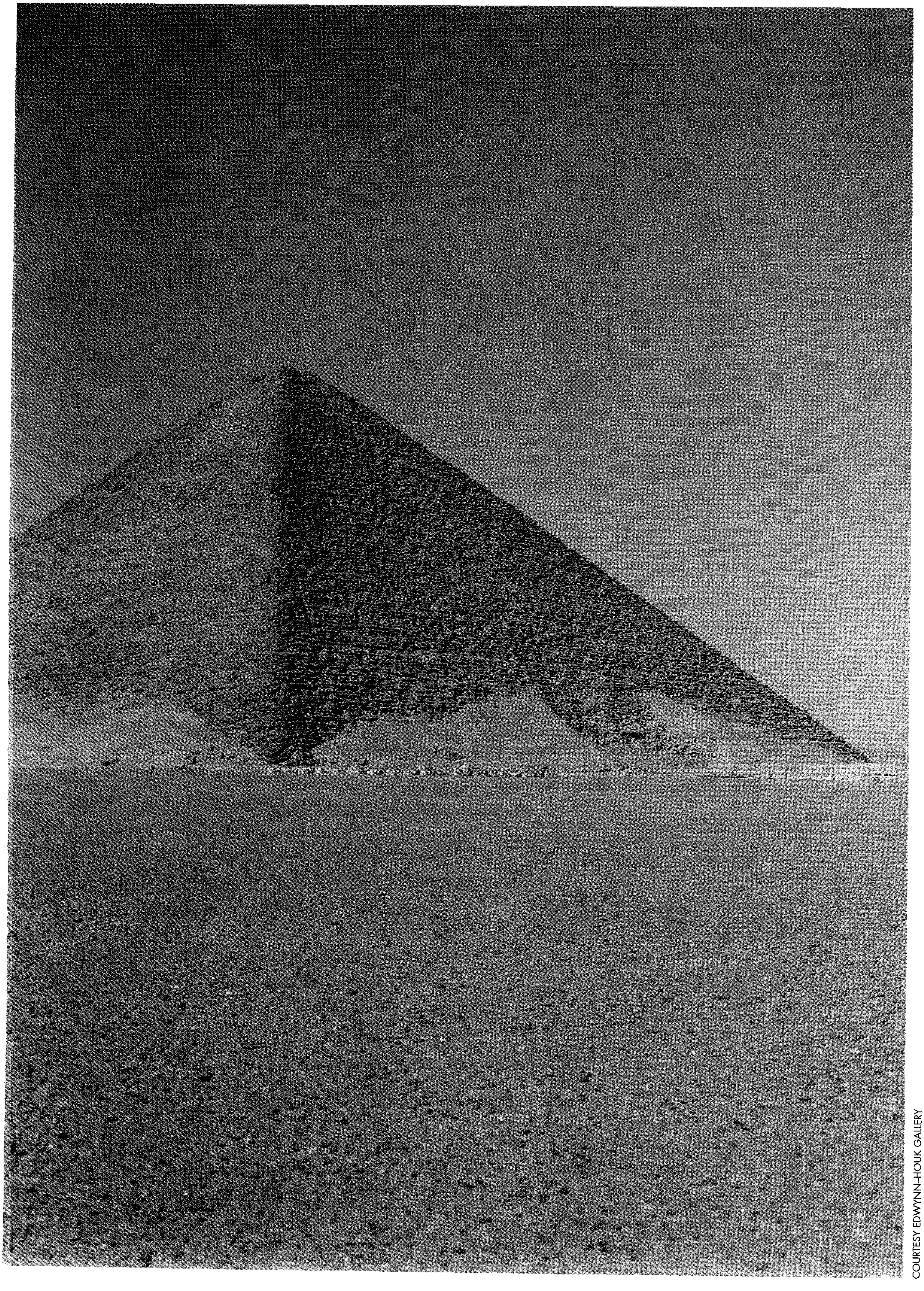
THE BIG PICTURE

Lynn Davis has spent much of the past twelve years in remote parts of the world, studying what she calls the "architectural puzzles" of ancient civilizations and making monumental landscape photographs. When she comes home, she produces huge (as big as forty-five by forty-five inches), brooding, elaborately toned prints, the most recent of which are now on view at the Edwynn Houk Gallery, in a show called "Africa."

Davis became known as a serious photographer in the nineteen-seventies, with portraits and nude studies. In 1986, she went to Greenland to photograph icebergs, and since then she has been working on a project that has taken her to Burma, Cambodia, the Australian deserts, Turkey, and most of Africa. The images she brings back from her trips are formally austere, but they carry tremendous emotional weight. This is achieved to a large extent through a toning process that was inspired by nineteenth-century photographs. Davis collaborates with a printer in Minneapolis, Steve Rifkin, who mixes up enterprising concoctions of selenium, sepia, and gold. Voluptuous photographs of Victoria Falls in the new show have a steely gray-blue tone that no picture has ever had before. The show also includes photographs of a mud mosque in Mali, the curved stone walls of Great Zimbabwe, the remains of what is said to have been the Queen of Sheba's palace in Ethiopia, and pyramids.

Davis says that she intended the pyramids to be less romantic than those in a series she made in 1989, but even though the new photographs are concerned with the geometry of the frame, they are luminous, mysterious, and lyrical. They were taken not long after terrorists massacred sixty tourists in Luxor, and she found herself the only foreign visitor at Dashur, which had recently been opened up after having been off-limits to civilians for years. She spent days alone with the pyramids there, taking photographs with the old Rolleiflex that is the only equipment, besides a light meter, that she carries with her. —Sharon DeLano





COURTESY EDWYNN-HOUK GALLERY

his pocket. No one would leave until the crisis was resolved.

The trust-company presidents continued to talk in the library's West Room, Morgan's private study. At 4:15 A.M., Morgan walked in with a statement providing for each trust company to subscribe its share to a new twenty-five-million-dollar loan. One of his lawyers read it out loud, then set it down on a table. "There you are, gentlemen," Morgan said.

No one moved.

Morgan went over to Edward King, head of the Union Trust, and drew him to the table. "There's the place, King," he said, "and here's the pen." King signed. The other presidents followed suit. A committee of five large trusts, led by King, was appointed to handle the loan and supervise the final-stage rescue of the Lincoln Trust and the Trust Company of America. Finally, at 4:45 A.M., the library's brass doors swung open to let the bankers out.

Four hours later, Elbert Gary and Henry Clay Frick met at the White House with Theodore Roosevelt and his Secretary of State, Elihu Root. They quickly sketched the outlines of the situation. As a pure business proposition, they did not want T.C. & I., they said: it would be of dubious benefit to U.S. Steel. Moreover, even though the acquisition of T.C. & I. would not, in their view, give them monopoly control over the country's steel companies, the purchase was likely to arouse public antagonism and raise antitrust questions, which was why they wanted clearance from Washington.

Roosevelt, by this time aware of the dangers just averted, desperate to prevent further trouble, and grateful for Morgan's expertise, approved the proposition. He drafted a note to his Attorney General. The steel men felt, he wrote:

> that it is immensely to their interest, as to the interest of every responsible businessman, to try to prevent a panic and general industrial smashup at this time, and . . . are willing to go into this transaction, which they would not otherwise go into, because it seems the opinion of those best fitted to express judgment in New York that it will be an important factor in preventing a break that might be ruinous. . . . But they asserted they did not wish to do this if I stated that it ought not to be done. I answered that while of course I could not advise them to take the action proposed, I felt it no public duty of mine to interpose any objection.

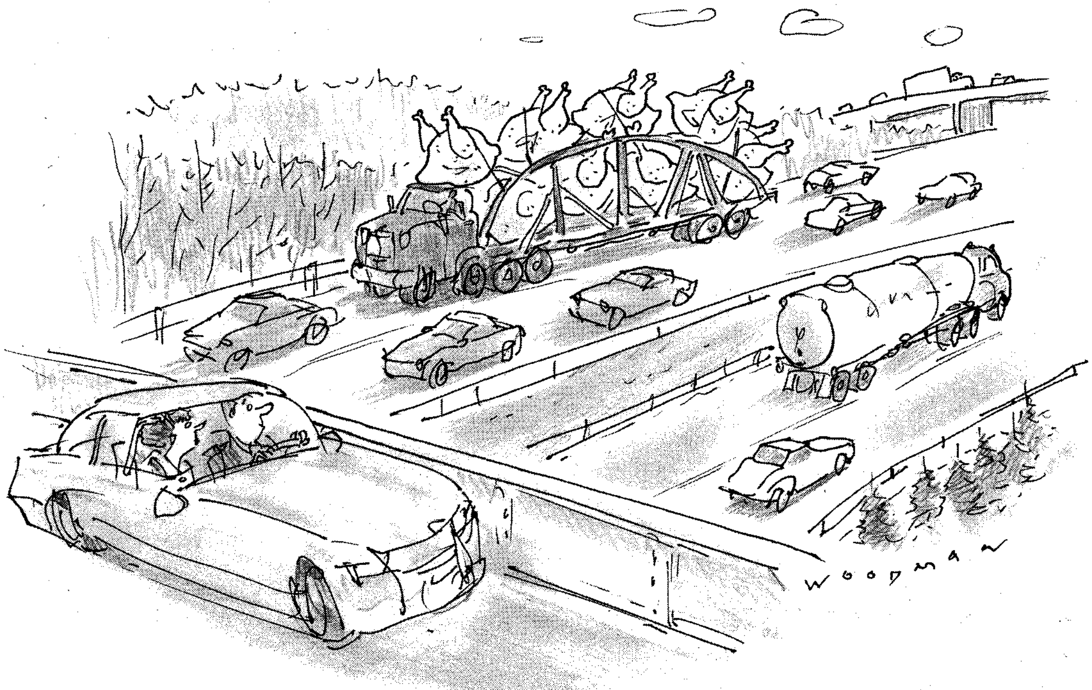
Minutes before the stock market opened, at 10 A.M., on Monday, November 4th, Gary telephoned George Perkins from the White House with news of Roosevelt's assent. Perkins relayed word to the Exchange, and the panic finally did, after two agonizing weeks, stop. The stock market had its best day since the trouble began. News of the all-night Morgan-library conference, with its assurance that the Lincoln Trust and the Trust Company of America would be "taken care of," began to restore general confidence. Millions of additional dollars in gold would be shipped from Europe. Morgan's wife wrote in her diary that night: "P. dined with [Anne] and me and dozed in his big chair and slept all night till 8 A.M."

On Tuesday, November 5th, the city's leading bankers and industrialists once again gathered at Morgan's library. By 11:30 A.M., carriages and automobiles lined Thirty-sixth Street from Madison to Park. Meetings went on all day and into the night as details of the final trust-company relief and the sale of T.C. & I. were worked out. Shortly before midnight, a wagon from the Waldorf-Astoria pulled up to the library's front door, and waiters carried coffee urns and hampers of food inside. At 3 A.M., Edward King issued a statement: the T.C.A. and the Lincoln Trust would pay their depositors in full, and would for the time being be controlled by his committee of five trustees.

On Wednesday, the stock market opened "buoyantly," George Perkins reported: "A tremendous change for the better had taken place . . . and all talk of failure and collapse ceased." The first seven million dollars in gold arrived from Europe, and began to ease the money supply. U.S. Steel's directors approved the takeover of T.C. & I., and over the next few days the exchange of U.S. Steel bonds for non-negotiable T.C. & I. shares relieved the pressure on banks, brokers, and markets, and on Grant Schley. He used the bonds to pay off twelve million dollars in debts, and his firm began to redeem its loans from the banks. The Roosevelt Administration told a Morgan partner that it was anxious to help in any way it could.

Charles Barney, the ex-president of the Knickerbocker Trust, whose involvement in the copper stock speculation had touched off the panic, killed himself on November 14th.

The art scholar Bernard Berenson told his patroness, Isabella Stewart Gardner, "Morgan should be represented as buttressing up the tot-



THE QUEEN OF CARTHAGE

Brutal to love,
more brutal to die.
And brutal beyond the reaches of justice
to die of love.

In the end, Dido
summoned her ladies-in-waiting
that they might see
the harsh destiny inscribed for her by the Fates.

She said, "Aeneas
came to me over the shimmering water;
I asked the Fates
to permit him to return my passion,
even for a short time. What difference
between that and a lifetime: in truth, in such moments,
they are the same, they are both eternity.

I was given a great gift
which I attempted to increase, to prolong.
Aeneas came to me over the water: the beginning
blinded me.

Now the Queen of Carthage
will accept suffering as she accepted favor:
to be noticed by the Fates
is some distinction after all.

Or should one say, to have honored hunger,
since the Fates go by that name also."

—Louise Glück

tering fabric of finance the way Giotto painted St. Francis holding up the falling Church with his shoulder."

FOR a moment in 1907, Morgan was a national hero. The next moment, however, the exercise of so much power by one private banker brought out America's long-standing distrust of financial élites. The T.C. & I. "deal" between the President and U.S. Steel generated the greatest animosity. Morgan was charged with creating the panic in order to grab a threatening rival on the cheap.

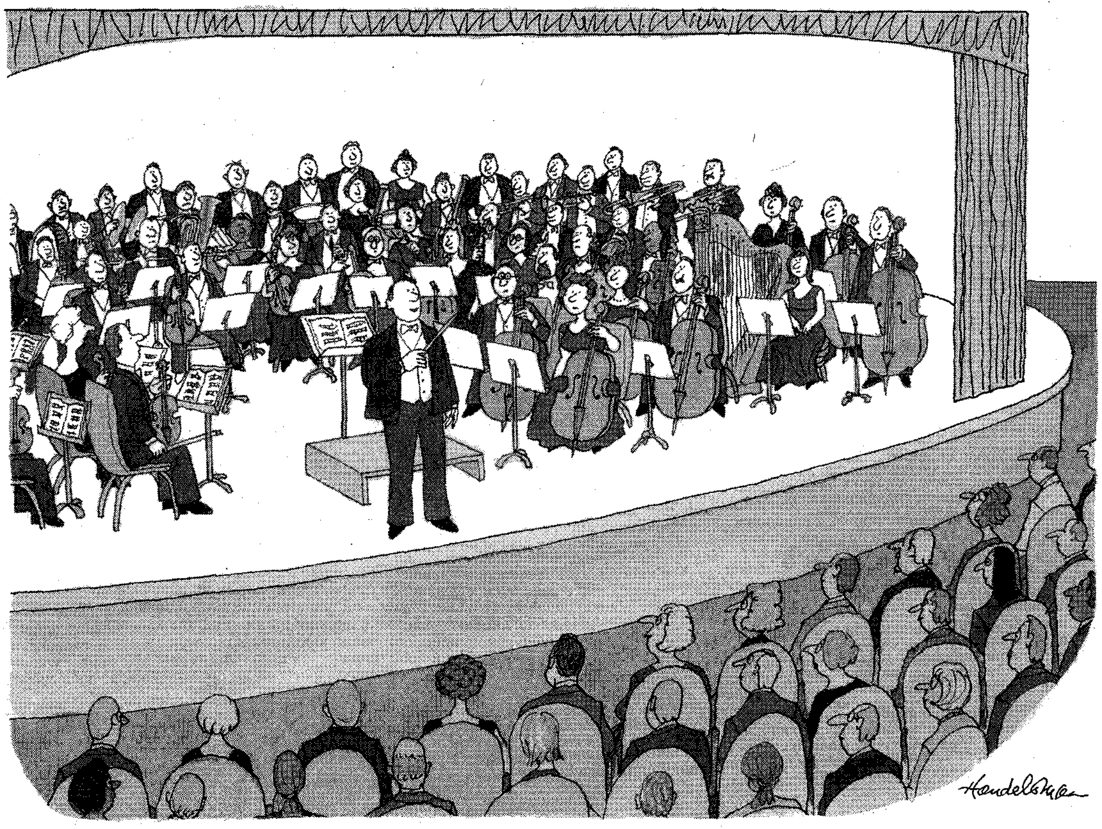
Few observers accepted U.S. Steel's portrait of itself as reluctant saint. The company's claim that it had acted only to prevent wider financial disruption seemed rank hypocrisy to a public on the lookout for abuses of corporate power. "There has been so much trickery and dishonesty in high places," Roosevelt wrote to his brother-in-law on November 16th, and muckraking exposés had "caused such a genuine shock to people that they have begun to be afraid that every bank really has something rotten in it. In other words, they have passed thru the period of unreasoning trust and optimism into unreasoning distrust and pessimism."

Upton Sinclair's 1908 novel, "The Money-Changers," portrayed a Morgan-like figure orchestrating the financial crisis to devastate ordinary people for his own gain. John Moody, who had started publishing *Moody's Manual of Industrial and Miscellaneous Securities* in 1900, said that if Wall Street's leaders "checked the panic" in acquiring T.C. & I. "they did it by taking a few dollars out of one pocket and putting millions into another." U.S. Steel had paid thirty million dollars for a company that critics now claimed was worth anywhere from ninety million to two billion—estimates that far exceeded those of the company's shareholders in 1907. Even if Morgan had paid the asking price of a hundred and thirty dollars a share, the total would have come to just thirty-nine million—less than half of the lowest retrospective valuation.

In 1909, a Senate Judiciary Committee investigation of the T.C. & I. takeover concluded that the "Morgan banks" in New York had squeezed Moore & Schley, and forced the brokers to "surrender" the T.C. & I. stock. According to the committee's report, T.C. & I. was worth several hundred million dollars, and it brought U.S. Steel control of the country's iron-ore supply and open-hearth rail production, as well as a monopoly of the iron and steel trade in the South and elimination of a "strong and growing competitor." The U.S. Steel trust had absorbed T.C. & I. in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, the committee declared, and Roosevelt had no business authorizing non-enforcement of the law.

Two years later, a House investigation of the steel industry, led by Augustus Stanley, of Kentucky, made newspaper headlines for months. Grant Schley, who had instigated the sale of T.C. & I. in 1909, told the Stanley committee that his firm might have survived without the sale, and that a five-million-dollar loan could have saved it—although at the time he had said that wasn't enough. One of the committee's most popular witnesses was the furious Bet-a-Million Gates, who had wanted T.C.& I. for himself. Gates had been abroad in the fall of 1907. He did not return until November 5th, to find that Schley had sold T.C. & I. out from under him. The fact that he had been on the Atlantic did not prevent him from testifying in colorful detail about events that took place during his absence, or from doubling the estimates of T.C. & I. mineral reserves. He claimed that U.S. Steel had got "the best property in the country and at a bargain price."

Theodore Roosevelt, no longer President, appeared before the committee in August, 1911, and took full responsibility for having authorized Elbert Gary and Henry Clay Frick to proceed with the deal. What mattered in early No-



"We will begin with Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony, and that will be followed by Beethoven's 'Unwanted Sexual' Overture."

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vember of 1907, he said, was to stop the panic, and his approval of the steel merger had done just that. He had known perfectly well that once the "imminent and too appalling" danger had passed, he would be subject to attack. "If I were on a sailboat," he explained, "I should not ordinarily meddle with any of the gear; but if a sudden squall struck us and the main sheet jammed so that the boat threatened to capsize I would unhesitatingly cut the main sheet even though I were sure that the owner, no matter how grateful to me at the moment for having saved his life, would a few weeks later, when he had forgotten his danger and his fear, decide to sue me for the value of the cut rope."

Representative Martin W. Littleton, of New York, wanted to show that Gary and Frick had hoodwinked Roosevelt, but the former President flatly denied it. "I was then thoroughly satisfied, and after events made me more thoroughly satisfied, that what was done was absolutely necessary to save the situation," he testified. "A good many of your questions enter into the hidden domain of motives. I never supposed they were going to take action that would be damaging to themselves. . . . Using the same simile I used before, if I think it necessary to haul on a rope on a boat to prevent its going over, I welcome help from any husky individual who hauls. I don't worry about his altruistic motives toward me. I want him to pull on the rope."

When George Perkins took the witness stand, Representative Charles L. Bartlett, of Georgia, suggested that Morgan had brought on the panic to destroy trust companies that competed with his bank. "What do you say to the statement that the panic was started to get rid of certain undesirable bankers, and that you gentlemen later were unable to manage it?" Bartlett asked.

Perkins stood up in high theatrical dudgeon and slammed his fist on the table. "I say that there never was a more infamous lie started than that. There is not a scintilla of truth in it. You might just as well say that a certain group of gentlemen made a contract with Mrs. O'Leary's cow to kick over the lamp that set Chicago on fire."

Witness after witness denied that the bankers had squeezed Moore & Schley, that U.S. Steel had hammered T.C. & I. to force down its price, that Morgan had cooked up the panic. Even Grant Schley could point to no evidence of diabolic design.

Two months later, George Wickersham, the Attorney General, brought suit against U.S. Steel under the antitrust law, partly in response to the absorption of T.C. & I. "A desire to stop the panic was not the sole moving cause" of the takeover, the charge read. The corporation had also aimed to acquire "a company that had recently assumed a position of potential competition."

If anyone in the drama of late 1907 can be retrospectively identified as Mrs. O'Leary's cow, it is Grant Schley. He was fighting to save himself, and, fortunately for him, the prospect of his firm's failure just as the panic eased did represent a threat to the tenuous recovery of the economy. The fact that Schley had an asset U.S. Steel might use was a stroke not of conspiratorial genius but of luck. There were no other takers for T.C. & I. in November, 1907. In the 1911 investigation, Representative Littleton asked Schley, "Was there any particular reason why the T.C. & I. should be made the subject of a trade between you and the Steel Corporation?"

"It relieved my needs," Schley answered frankly. "It relieved every friend I had and relieved my office."

MORGAN and the people he represented stood to lose millions of dollars if the economy collapsed and the country slid into a long depression. He loftily equated his own interests with the national interest, convinced that what was good for the Morgan clients was good for the country, and he had the authority and personal force to make his convictions prevail. That he acted out of self-interest made it impossible for his critics to see any legitimacy in what he did. Yet his intervention in 1907 had the greatest benefit for people outside his social class. Rich capitalists and big corporations suffer in economic meltdowns, but those hurt the most by prolonged contractions are farmers, workers, small businessmen, and the unemployed.

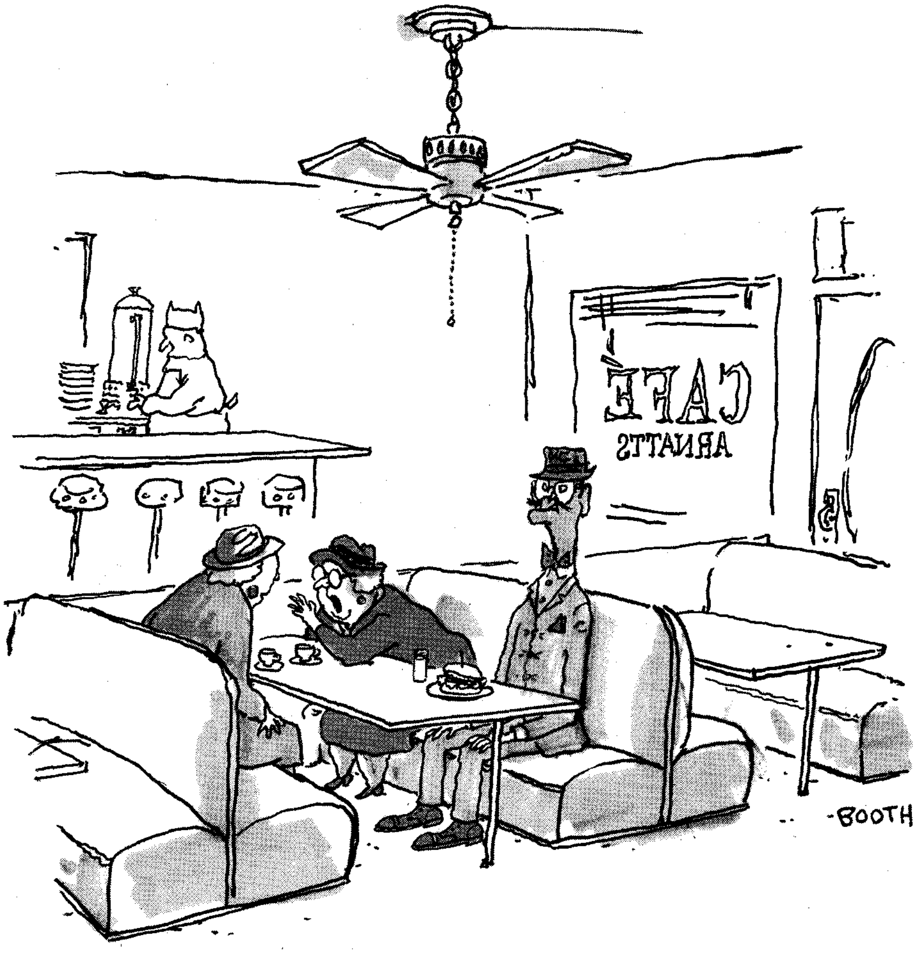
Morgan had been worried in the fall of 1907 not about a potentially competitive steel producer in the South but about sustaining the U.S. economy. He and his colleagues were pragmatic men. If they had really wanted to force down T.C. & I.'s price and pick the company up for a song, why didn't they simply watch Moore & Schley fail, let the banks unload the shares, and pay far less than thirty million dollars? U.S. Steel paid off three million dollars in T.C. & I. debts right away, and by 1913 had spent another $23.5 million on long-term improvements—almost exactly the amount its board chairman thought would be required—which effectively brought the acquisition price to $56.5 million, or twenty times T.C. & I.'s 1906 earnings. Even if the takeover had turned out to be a great deal for U.S. Steel, and it didn't, Morgan had not substantially underpaid. He was negotiating during a crisis, and paid a far higher price than his colleagues advised.

That the U.S. economy had grown far beyond one man's control was an irony Morgan's critics missed. His American firms lost twenty-one million dollars in 1907. John D. Rockefeller, reflecting on his and Morgan's support of seventy banks during the panic, said to a senator, "Now, that was a pretty nice thing for two such very, very bad men to do, wasn't it?"

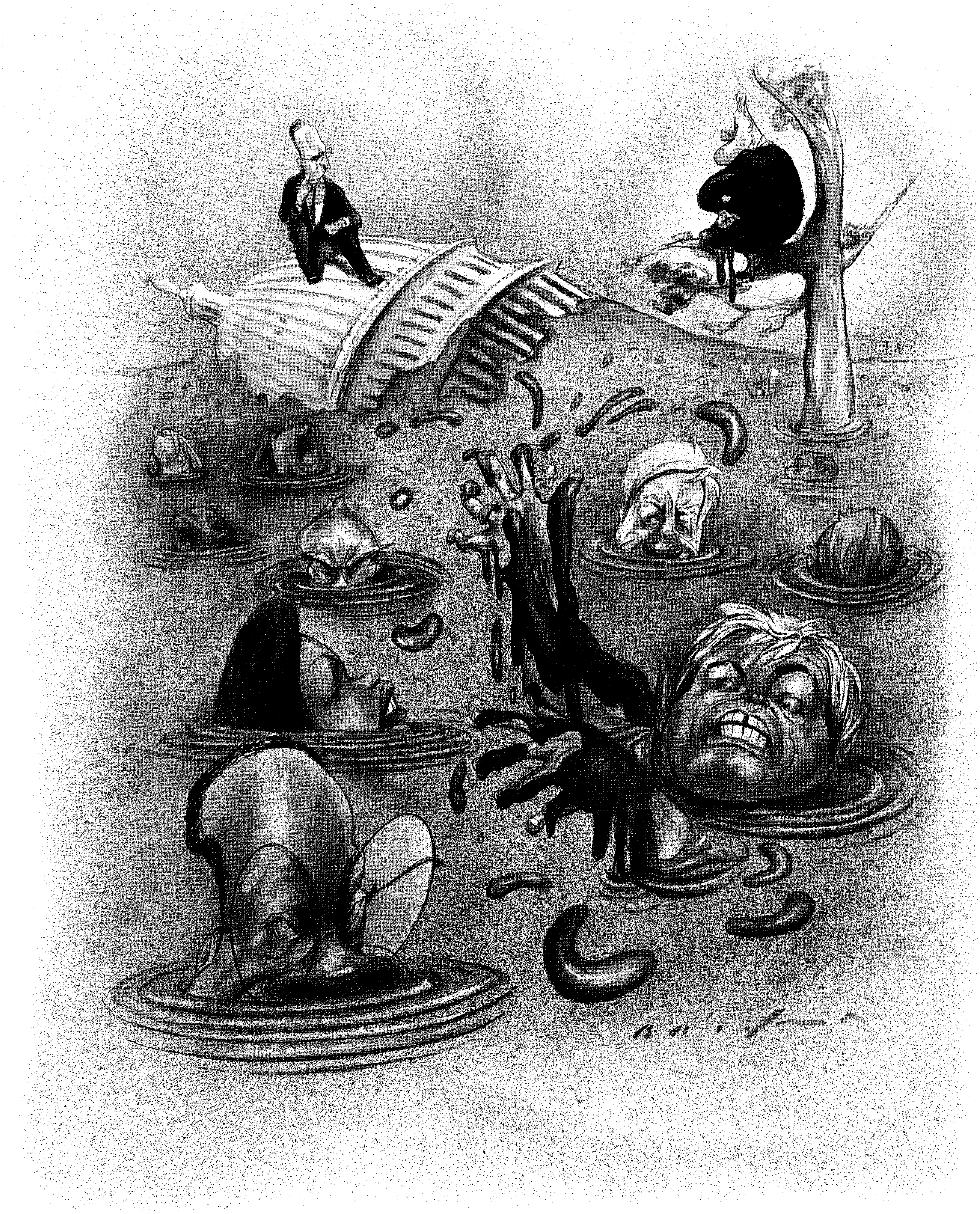
Though the 1907 crisis was relatively brief, it brought on a nationwide contraction that destroyed not only speculative enterprises but healthy banks and businesses as well, and threw people all over the country out of work. Those who did not blame these troubles on Morgan attributed them to the antiquated banking system, and the panic seemed to confirm what the country's leading financiers had been saying for some time—that America urgently needed a monetary policy, new banking legislation, and currency reform.

In 1908, Congress passed a Currency Act authorizing banks to form reserve associations that could issue money temporarily in emergencies, and setting up a National Monetary Commission to study the nation's financial structure. Five years later, after Morgan died, the United States established the Federal Reserve System. In 1914, Ben Strong became the first governor of the Fed in New York. Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz, pointing out the "striking contrast" between Morgan's effective handling of the 1907 crisis and the failure of the Federal Reserve to contain the 1929 panic and limit the consequent depression of the thirties, speculate about what might have happened had Strong not died in 1928: "Strong, more than any other individual, had the confidence and backing of other financial leaders inside and outside the [Federal Reserve] System, the personal force to make his own views prevail, and also the courage to act upon them.... If Strong had still been alive and head of the New York Bank in the fall of 1930, he would very likely have recognized the oncoming liquidity crisis for what it was, would have been prepared by experience and conviction to take strenuous and appropriate measures to head it off, and would have had the standing to carry the System with him."

In 1907, Morgan had recognized the coming crisis, and took appropriate steps to head it off. The spectre of a New York plutocrat intervening to restore the country's economic equilibrium elicited more fear than admiration among the general public, but on Wall Street and in the financial centers of Europe Morgan gained stature. This year's Fed-brokered bailout of Long-Term Capital Management aroused less vituperation than Morgan's bailout of Moore & Schley, but most Americans remain deeply and often justifiably cynical about the machinations of financiers. In the abstract, it would have been preferable to let the gamblers at L.T.C.M. and Moore & Schley fail, paying the price for their own recklessness. But in both cases the failures threatened further to unhinge the world's already highly unstable markets. And in both cases the interventions seem to have worked. Central bankers can't expect to be popular. They just hope to be right. ♦



"Handwriting analysis has revealed that Spencer is not in fact my husband."



Engulfed, devoured: Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, Jim Wright, Tip O'Neill, Gingrich. Can Bob Livingston survive? Can Clinton?

THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE TOWN THAT ATE ITSELF

The rise of tabloid politics began with Newt Gingrich, but the causes went much deeper. How did the Republicans and the Democrats confuse scandalmongering and endless prosecutions with governing?

BY JOE KLEIN

LATE in the afternoon of May 15, 1984, Speaker of the House Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, a politician known for his even-tempered charm, publicly and unexpectedly blew his stack. The moment was astonishing for several reasons. Speakers of the House rarely set aside the gavel and step down to take the microphone in the well; when they do, it usually is to provide a dignified conclusion to a debate of national import. But this was a spontaneous moment of rage. O'Neill rumbled down the center aisle of the chamber, seized the lectern, and began to excoriate a fellow-representative—an obscure backbencher, at that—for what he believed to be a severe breach of decorum. His face lobster-red and his finger wagging, O'Neill began to yell, over the derisive hoots of the Republican opposition, at a junior member from Georgia. It should come as no surprise that the member who had provoked O'Neill to such unseemly rage was Newt Gingrich.

"It was Newt's first big victory," Vin Weber, a former Republican representative from Minnesota who was a close Gingrich ally, said recently. "And it was a huge mistake on Tip's part." It was also one of the first significant skirmishes in the present era of personal political assault—an era that some observers hope may be coming to an end with Gingrich's departure as the current Speaker, his replacement by Bob Livingston, and Bill Clinton's settlement of the Paula Jones sexual-harassment case.

O'Neill had been boggled by three developments that were to become prominent features of today's political landscape: a new generation of abrasive, disrespectful baby-boom politicians from the suburbs (O'Neill was, of course, a titanic urban anachronism from the Boston area); a more partisan and ideological Republican Party, with a rising crop of Southerners to lead it; and the arrival within the halls of Congress of a disruptive new medium—television.

STEVE BRODNER

In point of fact, O'Neill had gone berserk over the Republicans' use of C-SPAN. A week earlier, Gingrich had made a late-night speech in which he seemed to question the patriotism of several Democrats, by name. The chamber was virtually empty, but his real audience was cable-TV viewers across the country. With the camera fixed, by House rules, on the orator, he was able to challenge the Democrats to defend their votes against defense spending. There was no way for the audience to know that the Democrats could not respond. O'Neill decided to change the C-SPAN rules without consulting the Republicans: he would allow cameras to pan the empty chamber. Gingrich rose to protest the "unilateral" decision—which led to O'Neill's angry response. "You deliberately stood in the well of this House and took on these members when you knew they would not be here," the Speaker shouted at Gingrich. "It's un-American. It's the lowest thing that I've heard in my thirty-two years here."

Chaos ensued. Representative Trent Lott, of Mississippi, the deputy Republican leader, demanded that O'Neill's comments be "taken down," since they violated House rules prohibiting derogatory remarks about fellow-members, and Representative Joseph Moakley, of Massachusetts, an O'Neill protégé, who had taken the chair, reluctantly was forced to agree. The Republicans, downtrodden after thirty years in the minority, were stunned and delighted: one of their most outspoken and least popular members had humiliated the Speaker of the House. Gingrich was given a standing ovation as he took his seat.

"That was the opening shot in the war," Weber recalled. "I guess I have mixed feelings about it now. I'm not ashamed of the things I said." Weber had contributed to the mayhem, calling O'Neill "one of the cheapest, meanest politicians to occupy that office in this century," but he'd said it off the House floor, and therefore free from the shackles of parliamentary language. "The Democrats were arrogant to the point of corruption," Weber added, "and Newt's idea was to expose the arrogance and corruption for what it was. It was guerrilla war, and I don't think we could have won the House in 1994 without those sorts of tactics. But the victory came at a price, and the price was a loss of civility. And we are paying for it now."

Indeed, a sustained, ever-deteriorating culture of personal assault was institutionalized in Washington well before the discovery, last January, that Monica Lewinsky delivered pizza to her President. It was not merely Gingrich's doing, either. The political atmosphere had turned rancid with hearings and investigations and special prosecutors and accusations and diatribes directed against public figures. The accusations and diatribes were nothing new, of course; but now they were accompanied by endless legal procedures. "There have always been political scandals," said Gordon S. Wood, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Brown University historian. "There have been periods of severe partisanship and vitriolic rhetoric. But I don't think we've ever had a time in American history like this one, with so many prominent figures facing legal action, and with politics criminalized."

In the past decade, scandals—sometimes over the most niggling misdemeanors—have become the defining events of public life, often far more compelling and significant than elections. In Washington, there has been a fierce, undeclared war between the two parties over what has come to be called "ethics" but has usually been something less than outright illegality; rather, it has been "The Appearance of Impropriety"—to quote the title of a recent book by Peter W. Morgan and Glenn H. Reynolds. The Clinton impeachment fiasco is only the latest in a series of public carnivals, orchestrated by furious partisans of both parties and cheered on by a happily voracious media. Two Speakers of the House, Gingrich and Jim Wright, of Texas, have been investigated (and Wright was forced to resign) because of ethical questions. Independent Counsels are now chasing two current and two former members of the Clinton Cabinet, as well as the President himself; a fifth investigation was curtailed when its target, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, died. Three Republican Supreme Court nominees—Robert Bork, Clarence Thomas, and Douglas Ginsburg—have been subjected to severe ideological and personal assault. A slew of Cabinet-level nominees—from John Tower to Anthony Lake—have been shot down, for reasons either trivial or incomprehensible and in any case long forgotten. And, just below the level of media attention, hundreds of other government officials have been investigated on charges—often frivolous complaints, filed anonymously—that were brought to the attention of the Inspectors General of the various Cabinet departments. At the moment, the nomination of Richard Holbrooke to the post of United Nations Ambassador is being held up by an anonymous conflict-of-interest complaint made to the State Department's Inspector General.

All this in a Washington that is, by most accounts, far less corrupt than it has ever been. "Compare this Congress to the one in 1950, during the era that many of the old-timers consider the golden age of civil discourse," Senator Joseph Biden, Democrat of Delaware, says. "Those guys were taking handouts, honoraria, junkets. When I came here, in 1973, Jacob Javits—a distinguished senator—was making money from a private law practice. You don't think he'd be under investigation today? By comparison, these new guys are squeaky clean. I can't stand most of the S.O.B.s—they're ideologues, they practice Khmer Rouge politics—but they are the cleanest bunch of politicians this capital has ever seen."

The phenomenon of constant prosecutions and investigations may be more damaging to the country's political future than any of the charges that have been brought, and this year's electoral reaction may finally compel the contending parties—the politicians, the prosecutors, and the press—to attend to the essential wisdom of the public revulsion against their behavior. But a change in the culture won't come easily: contentiousness and partisan legal harassment have become industries in Washington, providing crude entertainment and satisfying careers for thousands of shortsighted practitioners.

"Bad news. The mailman is going to attend the parole-board hearing."

"PEOPLE around here think the Clinton thing is an aberration," Alan Simpson, the former Republican senator from Wyoming and now the director of the Institute of Politics at the Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard, told me several days before the election. He reasonably argued that the President's recklessness and brazen untruthfulness were not common to most politicians; that the Starr investigation was justified by the extraordinary circumstances. But after an hour spent reviewing the sordid history of the past fifteen years—particularly the Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas hearings, which Simpson had witnessed at first hand as a member of the Judiciary Committee, and the successful campaign to oust his friend Bob Packwood, Republican of Oregon, from the Senate after a long record of sexual peccadilloes—I asked Simpson if he really thought that the Clinton case was an aberration. He laughed. "No, I guess there's been a sedimentary encrustation of these things," he said. "It might not be happening if all those other things hadn't happened."

The Clinton impeachment debacle is part of a pattern and a pathology in a political system infected by the unintended consequences of affluence, technology, and mangled reform. There are a great many opinions about how the trouble began; there is near-unanimity that the atmosphere must change; but there is not much hope that it can or will.

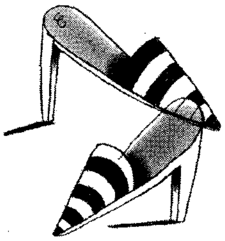
"THE trouble began when we political scientists finally got our wish—'responsible' political parties instead of broad, nonideological coalitions," Nelson Polsby, the Berkeley political scientist, says. "The idea was, of course, completely nuts from the start."

As long as the South was solidly Democratic, the two political parties remained broad coalitions. The Democrats were a mixture of conservative Southerners and urban Northerners (both groups supported Franklin Roosevelt's populist economic activism, but they agreed on little else); the Republicans represented Wall Street and Main Street, the Eastern élite and the Western middle class (who agreed on a preference for limited government, and little else). In the fifties and the first half of the sixties, the Southern Democrats—who by seniority controlled many of the significant congressional committees—joined with Republicans to prevent much of anything from happening except appropriations for highways and defense.

But the solid South shattered over civil rights. When Northern Democrats decided to support desegregation, a new generation of Southerners emerged within two decades and became Republicans. At the same time, many of the liberal children of the Eastern Republican élites joined the Democrats, as did Southern blacks when they gained the right to vote. As the parties grew more ideologically "responsible," debate became more abrasive and partisan. In the House of Representatives, Democrats—stoked by moral outrage over segregation, Vietnam, and Watergate, and made complacent by their seemingly permanent majority—became far less tolerant of the Republican minority. The musty, ornate rituals of collegiality, the respectful parliamentary language, the staff and privileges granted the minority, were gradually abandoned or severely modified to the Republicans' disadvantage.

Tip O'Neill got his revenge against Gingrich and the Republicans with an outrageous episode in 1985. A very close congressional race in Indiana, between the Republican Rick McIntyre and the Democrat Frank McCloskey, had been decided, on a recount, in favor of McIntyre by Indiana's Republican Secretary of State; McCloskey protested to the House of Representatives, which decided to investigate. O'Neill chose a three-member commission, composed of two Democrats and a Republican. Not surprisingly, the Democrats voted to seat McCloskey—and the entire Republican caucus walked out of the House chamber in protest. "That was Newt's second big victory," Vin Weber says. "People began to think, Well, if the Democrats are going to be like that, maybe Newt's right. We might as well blow up the place."

Gingrich, empowered, continued his guerrilla warfare. In 1987, he brought ethics charges against Jim Wright, O'Neill's successor as Speaker of the House. The charges were flimsy and confusing at best: Wright was guilty of fairly standard political shenanigans—selling to lobbyists mass copies of a campaign book he had written; a slightly too cozy relationship with a local businessman—and most members of Congress figured Gingrich's campaign would be no more than a minor form of harassment. But the Wright case had an unanticipated aspect that raised the ante considerably and exacerbated the war between the parties: the House Ethics Committee appointed a Special Counsel, a Chicago Democrat named Richard Phelan, to investigate Wright. A year later, Phelan was still digging, and Wright was forced to resign. "I was worn out, completely spent," Wright told me recently. "I couldn't sleep. I could see this thing dragging on another year or two and costing me a million dollars. I couldn't afford that. I gave a speech denouncing the 'mindless cannibalism' that was consuming the Congress and I figured my resignation would so shock and shame the members that they'd end the war. That turned out to be a miscalculation on my part, of course. Things only got worse."



By 1989, when Wright resigned, it was clear that the ethics war had reached a new level of intensity; each side was using high-powered legal weapons to hurt the other. The weapons were of recent vintage—the product of a historic government-reform effort that came after the Watergate scandal. "We were going to reform the system," says Joseph Biden, referring to his arrival in Congress. "But we created more problems than we solved. The campaign-finance laws, the Independent Counsel statute—nothing turned out the way it was supposed to."

Biden might have added the Ethics in Government Act of 1978; the reforms of the Presidential-primary selection process and of the congressional seniority system; the limitations on Presidential war and budgetary powers; the "whistle-blower" reforms that enabled disgruntled government employees everywhere to bring anonymous complaints against their bosses; and the establishment of independent Inspectors General to process the whistle-blower complaints—a forest of new regulations which sprouted up in the years after Watergate. Much of it was the work of the forty-three additional Democrats elected to the House in 1974—the first major infusion of baby-boom politicians into the Congress. "They came to Congress wanting to end the war in Vietnam," says Jim Thurber, a political-science professor at American University, who was an aide to Hubert Humphrey in the seventies. But the war ended four months after they arrived, "and the question was, What else could they do?" Thurber says. "One thing they all agreed on was the need to reform government."

Unquestionably, the reforms curtailed some egregious practices, but the powerful new ethics weapons were also put to trivial, partisan political use: the first investigation under the Independent Counsel statute, in 1979, was of Jimmy Carter's chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan, for alleged cocaine use. The second was of Carter's campaign manager, Timothy Kraft, also for alleged cocaine use. No charges were filed in either case. When Reagan came to power, the Democrats returned the favor by investigating Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan, Attorney General Edwin Meese, and the Presidential aides Michael Deaver and Lyn Nofziger—with only Deaver pleading guilty to an unrelated infraction. Indeed, when Donovan was finally cleared after a gruelling investigation, he asked the memorable question "Which office do I go to to get my reputation back?" The only Reagan-era investigation that transcended political pettiness had to do with the Iran-Contra scandal—the plan to sell arms illegally to Iran and use the proceeds to fund anti-Communist Nicaraguan rebels.

Along with the political reforms came an army of political reformers and a new industry, the ethics establishment. "I remember working as a congressional aide in the late sixties," says Norman Ornstein, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. "Across

THE VENUS FLYTRAP LEATHER SECTIONAL

the street from our office was a building—the Methodist Building—that was filled with antiwar activists. And I remember thinking, What are these people going to do when the war is over? They had learned a skill—political organizing—and they put it to use. There was an explosion of 'public interest' activist groups in the early seventies, and they had a significant impact not just on political reforms but also on environmental and consumer regulations. Then, in the late seventies, there was an explosion of industry groups and trade associations to counteract them."

The various interest groups exerted a centrifugal pull on the Democrats and the Republicans, moving them to their respective extremes, where the most passionate advocates were festering. The trade associations formed political action committees, which brought enormous amounts of money into the system—especially after the Federal Election Campaign Act was amended, in 1979, to permit unlimited contributions to the national political parties (the source of "soft" money, as opposed to the "hard" money contributed to specific candidates). The money was used to pay for advertising on television, which expanded in frequency and ferocity as the eighties began. For many Democrats, the "war" actually began in 1980, when the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) ran a scurrilous television campaign against six liberal senators, four of whom were defeated—which returned control of the Senate to Republicans for the first time in twenty-six years. "You can't underestimate the impact that the rise of vicious, false, distorted negative advertising had on the members of Congress," says Warren Rudman, a Republican who left the Senate in disgust in 1992. "For example, I had a hard time getting to like Joe Lieberman when he came to the Senate, because the campaign he ran against Lowell Weicker, who was a good friend of mine, was disgraceful. Eventually, we became friendly, because Joe's a terrific guy. But a lot of people don't get over those things. It makes it a lot harder to work together—a lot harder to do anything. You're always wondering whether this or that vote is going to be distorted in some crummy ad in the next campaign."

If Democrats point to NCPAC and Newt Gingrich as the root causes of the incivility, Republicans point to the liberal activists' campaign, in 1987, against the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court—and particularly to the hyperbolic speech Ted Kennedy made on the floor of the Senate, less than an hour after the nomination had been announced, about the various terrible things, like "back-alley abortions," that would happen in "Robert Bork's America."

"All of us sort of stunned our colleagues by going off the deep end at one point or another during one of these circuses," Alan Simpson says. "Teddy did it with his Bork speech. Sam Nunn did it with his campaign against John Tower. I did it with Clarence Thomas, when I went ballistic over this 'sexual harassment' crap. I'll tell you, you get so wrapped up in the moment, your mind sometimes comes unhinged."

The anti-Bork campaign and hearings seem decorous compared with the crude personal assaults that came to characterize later witch-hunts. Bork was a distinguished academic but an ideological bomb thrower; an argument could plausibly be made that he was not merely a conservative but a radical reactionary, who sought to overturn many of the precedents set by the liberal Warren Court. The leaders of the anti-Bork coalition decided to have the argument made substantively, by constitutional scholars, rather than emotionally; activists like Ralph Nader and Molly Yard, of the National Organization for Women, were persuaded not to testify. "Nader came to me before the hearings began," Joe Biden, then chairman of the Judiciary Committee, recalls, "and said the Bork hearings should be a constituency-building exercise. He wanted to do what all these groups do—send out mailings, raise money. I told him no, and I'm proud of the way those hearings were run." (Nader says he told Biden that the hearings could be a "public-education medium.")

But the battle over the Bork nomination proved to be an escalation in the ethics war for two reasons. It was the first time a coalition of ideologues had mounted an activist campaign—including grassroots organizing, opposition research, and even a television commercial (featuring the voice of Gregory Peck)—to oppose a Presidential nominee. This became a fixture of the post-Bork prosecutorial scene, with activist groups using ethics targets—ranging from Clarence Thomas to Bill Clinton—as a means of raising "awareness" and, more important, money from their supporters. "One of the things Ralph Nader taught us was to demonize the opposition," said Mike Pertschuk, a consumer advocate and Nader protégé, who wrote a book about the Bork campaign, and who now, like Vin Weber, has mixed feelings about the harsh tactics used. "And, you know," he added, "it's a very effective tactic—but there's a terrible cost to that."

Another notable feature of the Bork campaign was the invasion of the nominee's privacy—particularly the attempt to investigate Bork's video-store records by a reporter for the Washington *City Paper*, an alternative weekly. Only a few months earlier, reporters from the Miami *Herald* had waited in the bushes outside the town house of Gary Hart, the Democratic Presidential candidate, to catch him in an adulterous liaison.

The press, of course, has been a crucial, omnivorous, and obnoxious component of the machinery of scandal. Watergate made heroes of the Washington *Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, but it also caused a serious distortion in the culture of journalism: elected officials were now, routinely, presumed guilty. There was a gleeful quality to much of the reporting, and especially to the new, witlessly contentious television sound-bite shows: "Groups" and "Gangs" of journalists screaming at each other and making facile judgments about complicated issues. There was considerable peer pressure to stay cynical: reporters who wrote favorably about politicians were considered to be "in the tank."

"Over the last two decades, political reporters have become more concerned with how *other* political reporters judge their work," I was told by Bill Kovach, the curator of Harvard's Nieman Foundation. "Not wanting to look soft leads to a negative spin: no matter what position is taken by a politician, the journalistic tendency is to examine it in a negative light—to emphasize political calculations rather than the substance."

Tom Patterson, a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, has numbers to back up Kovach's analysis: in the 1960 Presidential election, three-quarters of the references to the candidates which could be characterized as positive or negative were positive; in the last three Presidential elections, the proportion had shifted to sixty per cent negative. Furthermore, Patterson cited a study that calculated that stories emphasizing conflict among politicians had increased three hundred per cent from the early seventies to the late eighties. "The Watergate investigative model was very scrupulous," Patterson said. "By the late seventies, that had changed—'investigative' reporting became getting on the phone and finding someone to attack someone else. The purpose wasn't to find things out but to bring things down."

It is difficult to overstate the ire that most politicians—even those who have had good relations with the press—now feel toward journalists. "The media love hate," says Representative Barney Frank, Democrat of Massachusetts, a homosexual whose private life was the subject of a breathless exposé in 1989. "In Washington, excessive cynicism is the most prevalent form of naïveté. I just wish reporters were as skeptical about bad news as they are about good news."

By 1989, the rigorous standards of Woodward and Bernstein's Watergate reporting had been long forgotten, even in much of the élite press. The enduring impact of George Bush's failed attempt to appoint the former Texas senator John Tower as his Defense Secretary was to take mainstream journalism to an ever more squalid level. The Washington *Post*, for example, published raw data from the F.B.I.'s investigation of Tower, including an unreliable account of two drinking-and-fondling incidents at an Air Force base—reported, as it happens, by Bob Woodward. The Tower case was bizarre and terrifying to many elected officials: no one could remember the last time a former senator had been denied a Presidential appointment by his colleagues in the Senate. But Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia and a respected defense expert, was a very credible leader of the opposition, arguing that even the possibility of heavy drinking would be intolerable in a Secretary of Defense. Jim Wright told me, "I liked Tower. We were friends, fellow-Texans, and I thought he'd been treated unfairly. But it was clear, after that, that the Republicans were going to demand retribution. On Texas Independence Day, March 2nd, that year, a Republican told me the caucus was energized to come after me now. I said, 'What is this? An eye for an eye?' And he said, 'No, a Texan for a Texan.' "

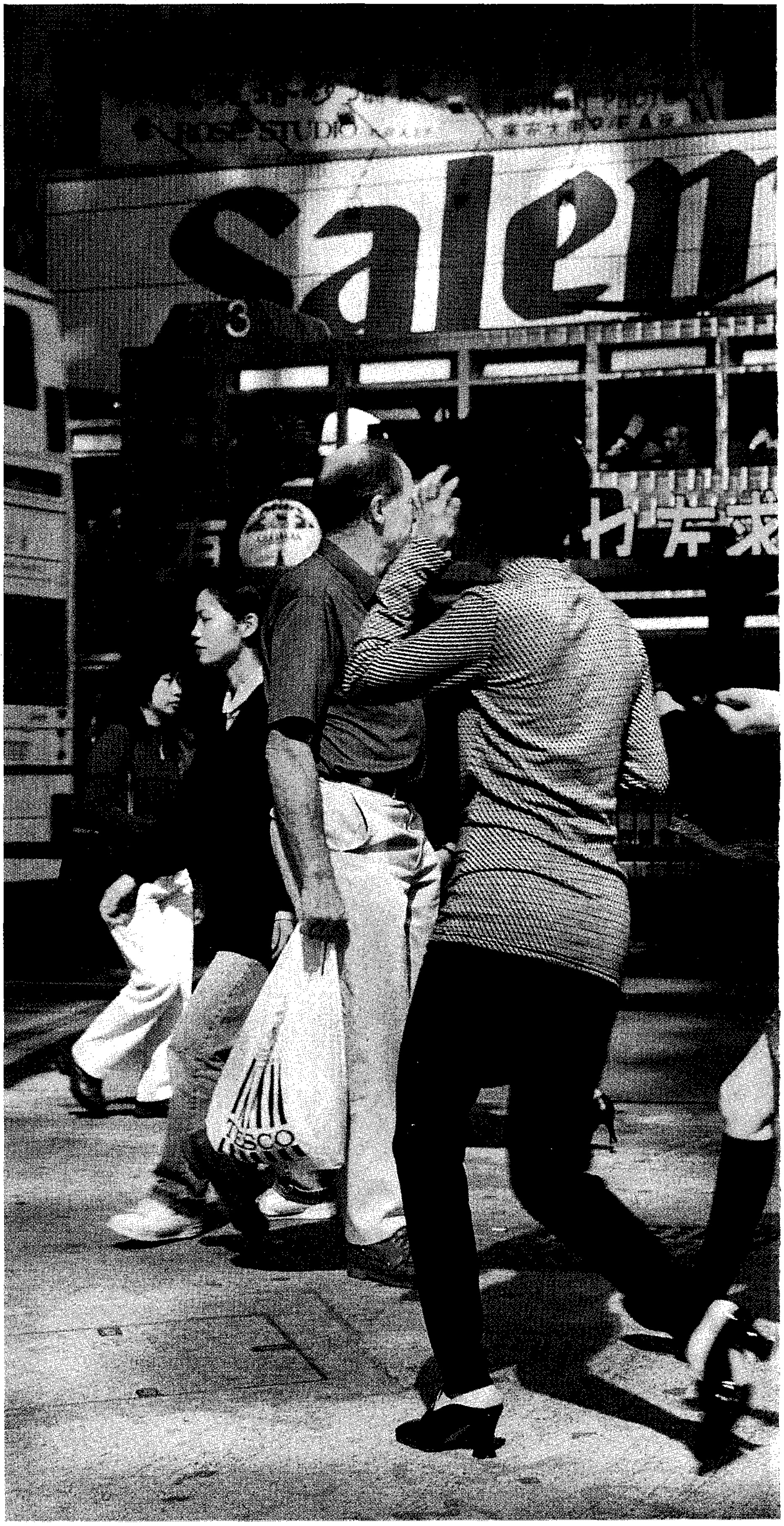
Wright and Tower had several things in common: neither was well liked, and neither had committed anything resembling a crime. "I disagreed with Newt about going after Wright," Vin Weber says. "In fact, Newt didn't have very much support at all in the Republican conference. But, when Wright was forced to resign, that was Newt's third big triumph—and the Republican conference looked at Newt and said, 'He's been right all along.' "

On May 15, 1984, the day Newt Gingrich successfully confronted Tip O'Neill and received a standing ovation as he took his seat, one Republican did not join in the applause: Robert Michel, of Peoria, Illinois, the House Minority leader. Michel was, in many ways, Gingrich's opposite. He had grown up poor, the son of an immigrant factory worker; he worked three paper routes during the Depression. After Pearl Harbor, he joined the infantry, rose to the rank of sergeant, and was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. When Michel was first elected to the House, in 1956, he had a mission that he believed was the essence of conservatism: he wanted to give his fellow-G.I.s and their families a period of peace and quiet. He wanted government kept under wraps; his goal was stability.

"I still think I had a more conservative record than Newt. The media called me a 'moderate,' because I talked with Democrats, but that was the way things were when I was coming up," Michel told me, speaking slowly, his voice deep and pleasant and unpretentiously mid-American. He was sitting behind his old congressional desk, which he had moved to his Washington, D.C., law office. "Those were happy days," Michel said. "My district represented Hiram Walker's distillery. A lot of members would come by the office for a snort, and we'd gas about this and that. When we had committee meetings, we'd sit at long tables, the majority and minority across from one another, and so we'd have to talk and work things out. Now they have these long daises, with the majority on one side and the minority way over on the other, and no one gets to know one another."

Newt Gingrich arrived in 1979, a professor and political activist who had only read about the wartime horrors that Bob Michel had seen. Gingrich was obsessed with books about military tactics and had become something of a reverse Clausewitz: he considered politics the extension of war by other means. Michel was appalled. He figured politics was the opposite of war. "I don't think you can underestimate the generational aspect of this situation," Vin Weber says. "Our generation came in, and we had absolutely no respect for any of the traditions—not the Speakership, not the Presidency, not bipartisanship. We thought the parliamentary language was stuffy and silly. We thought hypocrisy was the only sin. Bob Michel's generation—they wanted to make life less political for the returning veterans. We wanted to politicize everything. Remember the slogan 'The personal is political'? That was the feminists, right? That became us, too."

In the early nineteen-nineties, both the Gingrich Republicans and the feminists had their moments. The 1991 campaign against Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court was far more personal and extreme than the campaign against Robert Bork had been. Members of the civil-rights establishment set the tone by calling Thomas a variety of despicable names because he disagreed with the prevailing wisdom about affirmative action. Then the feminists came to the fore with the appearance of Anita Hill, who accused Thomas of offensive ribaldry when he was her boss at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; she was



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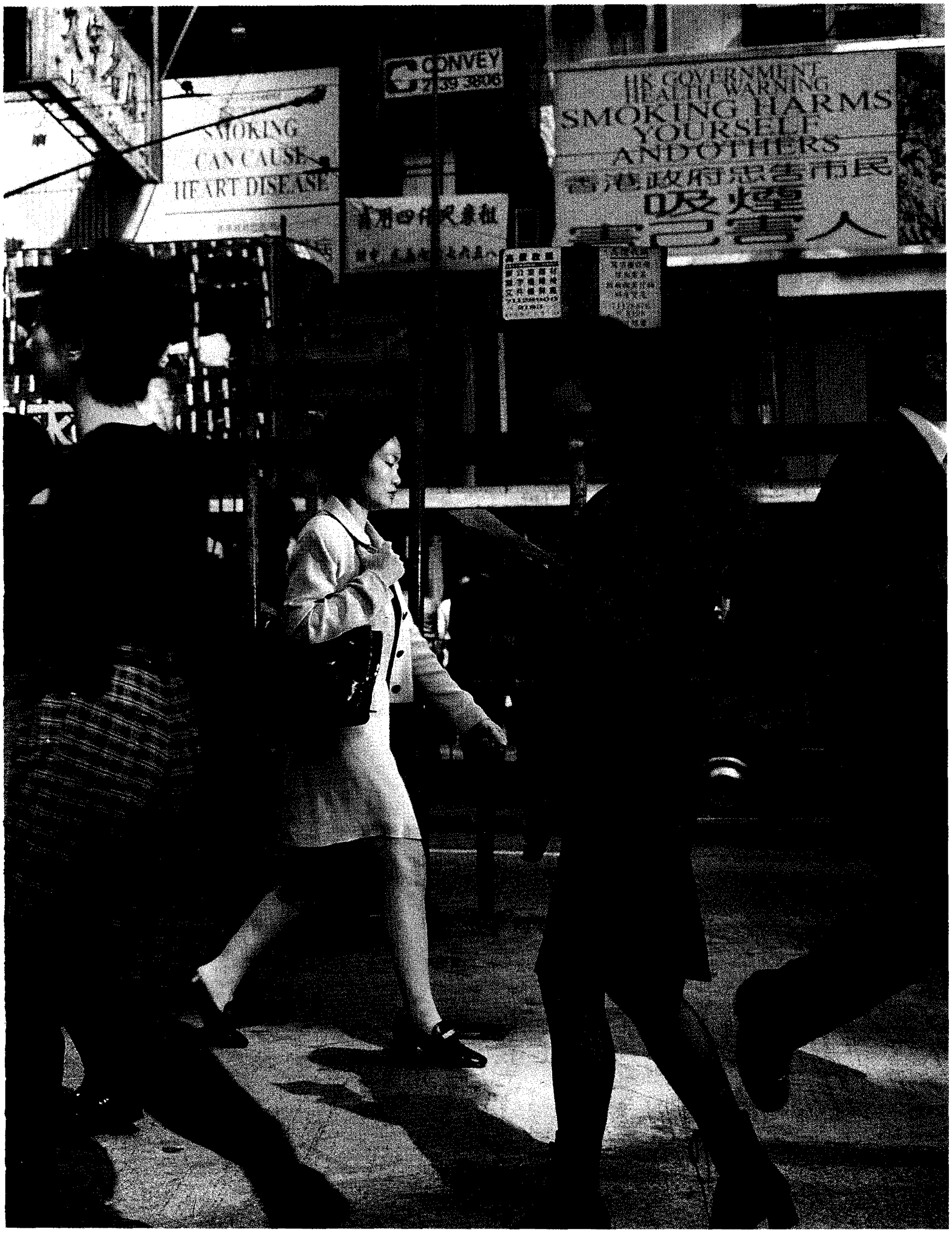
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ripod and flash units on the streets of such cities as Naples, Odessa, London, and Los Angeles to capture passersby in what he calls elancholy, and fear. "Hong Kong" (1996) is included in a current show of diCorcia's photographs at Pace Wildenstein's SoHo gallery.

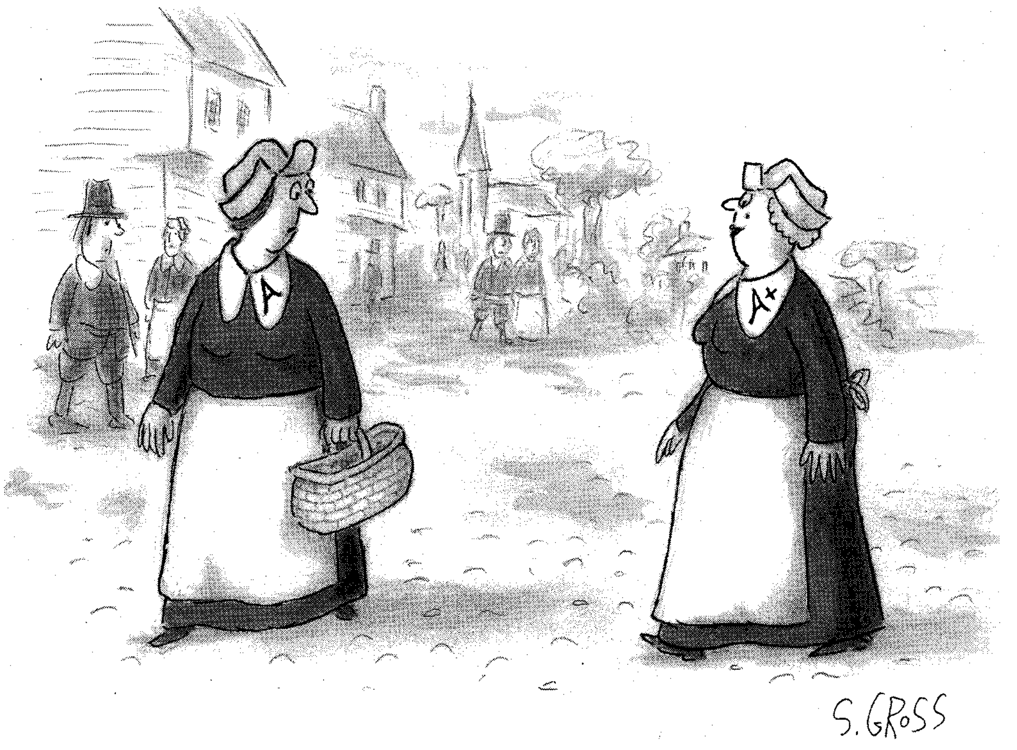
questioned intensely and skeptically by Simpson and several other Republicans on the Judiciary Committee. A delegation of feminists visited Joseph Biden, just as Ralph Nader had done four years earlier. "They wanted the committee to expose the fact that Thomas watched pornographic films," Biden recalled. "But I told them that if he did, it wasn't material. It was private." (Of course, the media were happy to provide all the relevant details to a soap-opera-loving public.) The incredible ugliness that both Thomas and Hill were forced to suffer—the grotesque invasion of their personal lives—was becoming part of the price paid by public servants. Any future Presidential nominee could expect to have his or her closet emptied—as Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood soon would for alleged improprieties associated with the employment of immigrant babysitters. A businessman who had declined Bill Clinton's offer to join the Cabinet told me, "And go through *that*? What did I need that for?"

Meanwhile, Gingrich's demolition work in the House proceeded apace. The end of the Cold War meant that political anarchy could flourish in placid times. In the early nineties, hundreds of members were tainted by their misuse of the House bank and post office (the latter operation resulted in a jail term for Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee); even the prices charged by the barbershop were called into question. At the same time, Gingrich expanded his operation and took on his President, George Bush: in 1990, when Bush broke his "No new taxes" pledge by cutting a budget deal with the Democrats, Gingrich challenged the result and forced a renegotiation—the first sign that the weakened President might not be invincible in the 1992 elections.

Bob Michel, who had supported the Bush budget deal, knew that he was going to be Gingrich's next target. "I could see what was happening behind my back," Michel told me. "Newt was coming along. He was going to challenge me for the leadership in 1994. It would have been a bitter challenge." He paused a moment. "I might have lost. I decided that I'd had enough." He brightened and added, "I'm so *happy* I'm out."

The Clinton era has been marked by dense, endless, and almost always peripheral scandals, pursued by a battalion of prosecutors who have spent years and millions of dollars to very little effect. Whitewater—the failed Arkansas land deal that initiated the prying into the President's past and private lives—has always seemed a remarkable waste of time and money, a trivial investigation, based on the testimony of unreliable witnesses, of activities that had nothing to do with Bill Clinton's performance in federal office. The subsequent investigations by Kenneth Starr's prosecutorial team—the Travel Office firings, the F.B.I. files mistakenly ordered by Security Office incompetents, and, of course, the Lewinsky perjury entrapment—uncovered poor judgment (and, in the Lewinsky case, spectacularly louche behavior) on the President's part, but seem more a sort of political harassment than the pursuit of serious legal or ethical lapses. Webster Hubbell, the former Associate Attorney General who went to prison for crimes unrelated to Clinton, was indicted yet again by Starr, on perjury and other charges, last week. (An earlier indictment, for tax evasion, had been thrown out by a federal judge.) The other Independent Counsels assigned to Clinton Cabinet officers have managed to isolate such threats to the republic as petty gift-taking (former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy), understating the amounts paid to an ex-mistress (former Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros), and choosing a politically friendly Indian tribe's position over that of a less friendly tribe in a casino dispute (Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt).

To the great glee of many Democrats, there also was a Gingrich scandal. It was another in the series of incomprehensible technical violations of ethics rules. In 1997, Gingrich agreed to pay a three-hundred-thousand-dollar fine for using a tax-exempt fund for political purposes. There was an Al Gore scandalette, too. It was an even more trivial brush with the fund-raising regulations, in which a rarely used hundred-year-old statute—pertaining to shakedowns of government employees on government property—was mobilized after Gore was found to be making fund-raising calls from his White House office. No doubt there will be George W. Bush scandals in the months to come: the Governor of Texas, who is the front-runner for the Republican nomination in the year 2000, has admitted to a misspent youth that lasted well into adulthood. If Bush, or any other Republican, is elected President in 2000, he can expect the same sort of treatment from the ethics police—and from the Demo-



crats in Congress—that Bill Clinton has received from the Republicans.

"I don't know where the bottom is," said Harvard's Tom Patterson, speaking of the press, but his concern easily could extend to the other parties to the scandal-making process—the politicians and the prosecutors. "I don't think this sort of negativity can be sustained in the long run."

There is talk of new reforms. The Independent Counsel Act will probably be abandoned—or, at the very least, severely modified—when it comes up for renewal in 1999. The system of political finance may be modified again. There will be a more vigorous effort to ban "soft" money in the next Congress, especially after the noble victory of Wisconsin's Senator Russell Feingold, who nearly lost his seat on a point of principle: he insisted that his campaign be run according to the finance laws he wants to see enacted. But the impact of any new reforms is likely to be minimal. As long as there is a First Amendment, people with money will find a way to get their messages across.

And the media are likely to remain negative and increasingly unaccountable. Internet gossip will continue to wend its way into the mainstream; the pressures of deadline and market share—and the promise of television appearances and lecture fees—will cause reporters to bend the rules to retail sensational tidbits. "I think there's an answer to that," says Alan Simpson, smiling wickedly. "Some politician is going to turn to a reporter who asks an ugly, invasive, disgusting personal question and say, 'I'll answer that if you will. Tell me what you did. Did you ever use cocaine? You're a public figure. You're on TV all the time. The public has a right to know. What gives you the moral authority to ask that question? Who gave you your Jesus shoes?' "

"Might I recommend the orange Crayola for the smaller flowers and the blue-green for the foliage?"

IT is possible that Newt Gingrich's departure from public life will be a turning point—the moment when comity began to be restored. But I suspect not. In the weeks before the election, many of the old-timers I interviewed about the deteriorating political atmosphere seemed to yearn for such an epiphany. More than a few of them cited Joseph Welch, the Boston lawyer who, in 1954, finally punctured Senator Joseph McCarthy's balloon with a simple question: "Have you no sense of decency, Sir, at long last?"

McCarthy was already heading for trouble, having overreached by taking on the apparition of Communism in the United States Army. His moment onstage was ending, and Welch provided the appropriate exit line. The current moment is far more complicated. When the Welch scenario came up in interviews, I'd usually ask, Who would have the moral authority to do something like that now? Whom would he address his remarks to? Depending on your point of view, a latter-day Welch might credibly speak those very words—"Have you no sense of decency?"—to Ken Starr, Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, or to any of the special-interest extremists of the left and right, or to any member of the press. Or all of the above.

And although it might be argued that the American people—in a sweet, Frank Capra sort of way—finally chose to play the Joseph Welch role themselves in this past election, one wonders how effective the defenestration of Newt Gingrich will be. Gingrich wasn't the sole dispenser of the poison that has consumed public life; he simply exploited the noxious atmosphere more persistently than anyone else. He was a creature of the phenomenon, not the phenomenon itself. The fundamentals of contentiousness remain in place. The special-interest groups will be more than ready to exploit the next public drama that comes along. There are journalists ready to write the stories, politicians who'll be anxious to make the headlines, political consultants who'll be more than happy to make the ads, and an ethics industry on alert for the next chance to prosecute.

Washington's partisans continue to see each new prosecution as separate and unique—as justified or improper, according to political taste—rather than as part of a disorder that has done significant damage to the public's faith in politics. The myopia is often stupefying. A few years ago, I had dinner with Newt Gingrich. He was in the midst of his own ethics travails, and was clearly in some pain. I asked him if he had more sympathy now for Jim Wright. Gingrich bristled. "Absolutely not!" Then he said, "There's no comparison. What Wright did was criminal." ♦

FICTION

A DREAM OF MEN

Hormones at war.

BY MARY GAITSKILL

LAURA was walking around her apartment in a cotton nightgown with green and yellow flowers on it muttering, "Ugly cunt, ugly cunt." It was a bad habit that had got worse in recent months. She caught herself muttering while she was preparing her morning coffee and made herself stop. But it's true, she thought. Women are ugly. She immediately thought of her sister Anna Lee making herself a chicken-salad sandwich to have with a glass of milk. Anna Lee was not beautiful, but she wasn't ugly either. She thought of her mother, frowning slightly as she sat at her kitchen table, drawing a picture of fruit in a dish. Her mother had a small, dear bald spot on the top of her head. If anyone said "ugly cunt" to her sister or her mother, Laura would hit him. She would hit anyone who said it to her friend Danielle. Well, she didn't really mean it when she said it. At least not in the normal way.

She put her foot up on the table and drank her coffee out of a striped mug the size of a little bowl. She had to be at her job at the medical clinic in half an hour; she wasn't late, but, still, her body was racing inside. Even though she'd been at the clinic for five years, every morning her body acted as if getting out the door and into the world were an emergency. This was even more true since her father died. The death had turned her inside herself. Even when she was in public, talking to people or driving through traffic or carrying forms and charts and samples in the halls of the clinic, she dimly sensed the greater part of herself turned inside, like a bug tunnelling in the earth with its tiny sensate legs. All through the earth was the dull roar of unknown life forms. She could not see it or hear it as she might see and hear with her human eyes and ears, but she could feel it with her fragile insect legs.

She finished her coffee and got out the door. Houston in the summer was terribly hot and humid; the heat made her feel grossly physical. She gave a tiny grunt to express the feeling; it was the kind of grunt her cat made when it lay down and settled in deep. She opened her car; there were cassettes and mixed trash on the floor and the passenger seat, and she thought there was a sour smell coming from somewhere. She let the air-conditioner run with the door open, sitting straight up in the seat with her legs parted wide under the tented skirt of her uniform. Across the street, there was a twenty-four-hour flower market in an open shack; dimly, she could see the proprietor inside, wiping his brow with a rag. He looked like he was settled deep into something, too.

Last night she had dreamed of two men in a vicious fight. At first, they had been playing basketball. One of them seemed the apparent winner; he was tall, handsome, and well developed, while his opponent was short and flabby. Watching the game, Laura felt sorry for the little one. Then the game became a fight. The men rolled on the ground, beating each other. The little flabby one proved unexpectedly powerful, and soon he had the tall handsome man pinned on the ground. As Laura watched, he pulled out a serrated knife and began to cut off the top of the handsome man's skull. The handsome man screamed and struggled. Laura ran to them and took the knife away from the small man. He pulled out another knife and tried to stab her. She cut him open from his neck to his crotch. He remained standing; offal fell from his opened body.

She lit a cigarette and closed the car door. Her father had been a small man. When he was younger, he'd struck boxing poses in front of the mirror, jabbing at his reflection. "I could've been a bantamweight," he'd said. "I still have the speed."

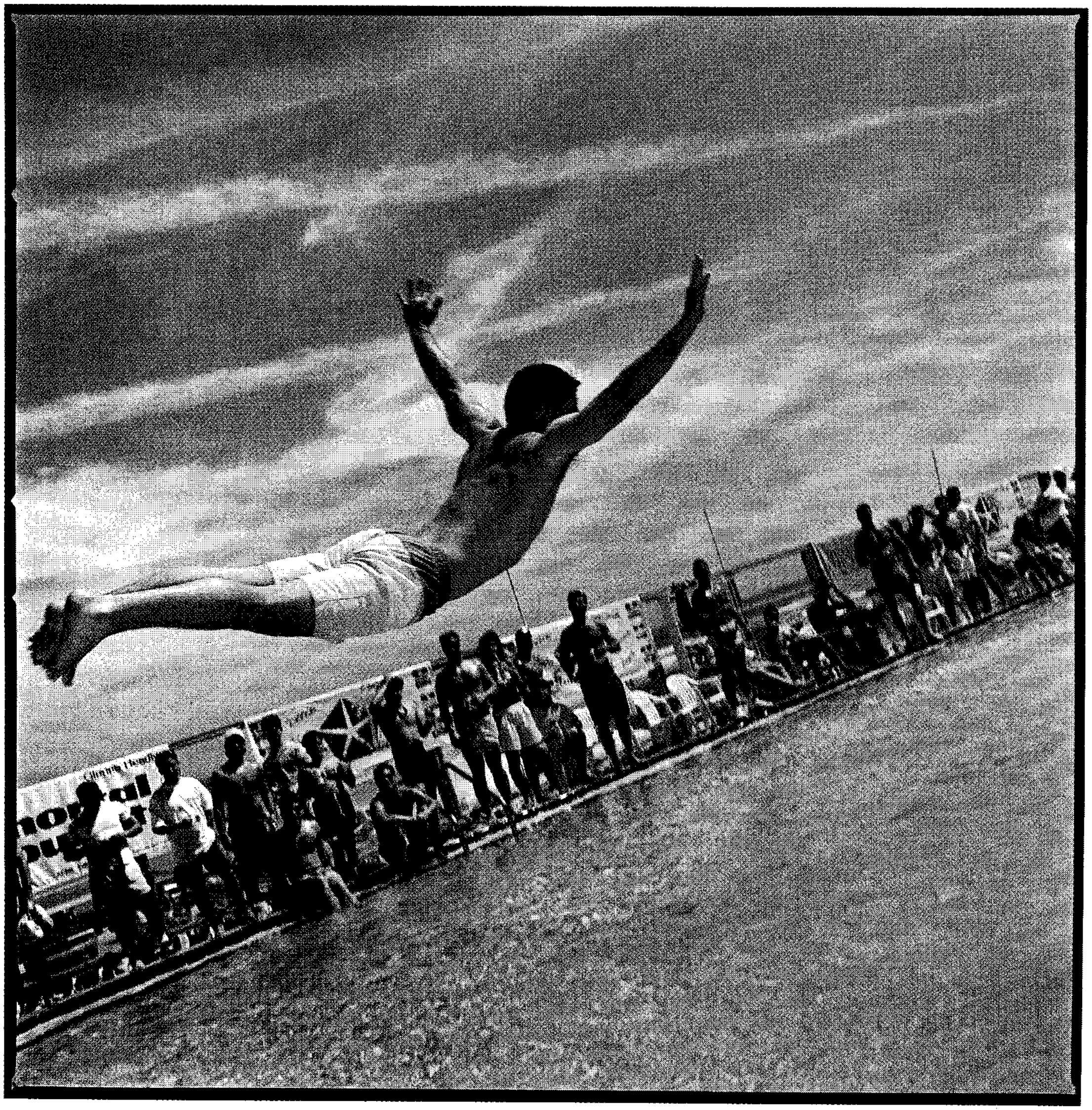
Laura lived in a run-down neighborhood that was usually slow, but today there was heavy traffic. She talked to herself as she negotiated the lanes, speeding and slowing in a lulling rhythm. When she talked to herself, she often argued with an imaginary person. This time, she argued about the news story concerning the President's affair with a twenty-two-year-old intern. "Personally, I don't care," she said. "It shouldn't really matter what they're like sexually." Stopped at the red light, she glanced at the people waiting for a bus. They looked tenacious and stoic as a band of ragged cats, staring alertly down the street or pulled tidily into themselves, with crossed legs, holding their handbags. "It's hard to tell what really went on between the two of them anyway," she continued. "Sometimes things that look awful on the outside look different when you get up close."

Her father had started dying in a hospital in Tucson. By the time Laura had got there, her mother and her sister were fighting with the doctors about his treatment. He was too weak to eat, so they'd stuffed tubes down his nose to feed him something called Vita Plus. "His body doesn't want it." Anna Lee was talking to the nurse. "It's making him sicker." It was true. As soon as Laura looked at her father, she knew he was going to die. His body was shrunken and dried, already half abandoned; his spirit stared from his eyes as if stunned. "I know," said the nurse. "I agree with you. But we have to give it to him. It's policy."

"Hi, Daddy," said Laura.

When he answered her, his voice was like an old broken sack holding something live. He was about to lose the live thing, but right now he held it, amazed by it, as if he had never known it before. He said, "Good to see you. Didn't know if you'd come."

She stopped at a crosswalk; there was a squirrel crossing the street in short, halting runs. She stopped traffic for a minute, waiting for it. A woman sitting on a public bench smiled at her. The woman sat with her knees tensely open



"His delicate beauty was almost too bright-lit by his youth and maleness." Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.

and her feet poised on their balls. In her pointy shoes, her feet were like little hooves. It made sense that she was on the squirrel's side.

They brought their father home to be cared for by hospice workers. By that time, he was emaciated and filled with mucus that he could not discharge through his throat or nose. It ran out of his nostrils sometimes, but mostly they heard it, rattling in his lungs. He couldn't eat anything, and he didn't talk much. They put him in the guest bedroom, in a big soft bed with a dust ruffle. The sun shining in the window made his skin so transparent that the veins and spots on his face became more present than the skin. He blinked at the sun like a turtle. They took turns sitting with him. Laura stroked his arm with her fingertips, barely grazing his fragile skin. When she did that, he said, "Thank you, Laura honey." He had never called her honey before.

He was so weak he couldn't turn himself, so two hospice workers had to turn him. When they did, he got angry; his skin had gone so thin that his bones felt sharp, and it hurt him to be moved. "No, leave me alone," he'd say. "I don't care, I don't care." He would frown and even slap at the workers, and, in the fierce knit of his brow and his blank, furious eye, Laura remembered him as he had been twenty-five years ago. He had been standing in the dining room, and she had walked by him wearing flowered pants that were tight in the seat and the crotch. He'd said, "What're you doing walking around with your pudenda hanging out like that? Nobody wants to see that."

SHE arrived at the clinic early and got a good place in the parking garage. On the way up to the seventeenth floor, she shared the elevator with Dr. Edwina Ramirez, whom she liked. They had once had a conversation in the break lounge during which they both revealed that they didn't want to have children; Dr. Ramirez had looked at Laura suddenly, a deep, bright spot inside her eye. "People act like there's something wrong with you," she said. "Don't they know about overpopulation? I mean, yeah, there's biology and shit. But there's other ways to be a loving person." She had quickly bent to take her candy bar out of the machine. "You know what I mean?"

Ever since then, Laura had felt good around Dr. Ramirez. Every time she saw her, she thought, Ways to be a loving person. She thought it as they rode up in the elevator together, even though the doctor stood silently frowning and smoothing her skirt. When they got to their floor, Dr. Ramirez said "See you" and gave Laura a half smile as they strode in opposite directions.

Laura went to the lounge to get a

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coffee. Some other technicians and a few nurses were sitting at the table eating doughnuts from a box. Newspapers with broad, grainy pictures of the White House intern lay spread out on the table. In one of the pictures, the girl posed with members of her high-school class at the prom. She stood very erect in a low-cut dress, staring with focussed dreaminess at a spot just past the camera.

"She's a porker," said a tech support. "Just look at her."

"Beautiful hair, though," said a phlebotomist.

Laura lingered at the little refrigerator, trying to find the carton of whole milk. Everybody else used two-per-cent.

"It makes me sympathize with him," said a nurse. "He could have anybody he wanted, and he picks these kinds of girls. Like, they're not models, they're not stars."

"That makes you sympathize? I think that's what's gross about it."

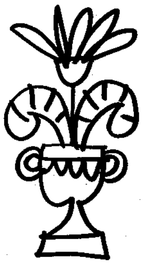
"But it might not be. It might be because he wants somebody to be normal with. Like somebody who's totally on his side who he can, like, talk about baseball with. Somebody who's pretty in a normal way."

"What? Are you nuts? She was a fat girl sucking his dick!"

Laura settled for edible oil creamers. She took a handful, along with a pocketful of sugars and a striped stir stick.

THE day they brought their father home, the plumbing in the bathroom backed up. Sewage came out of the bathtub drain, water seeped into the chenille tapestry their mother had put up around the window. The sight of it made Laura's heart pound.

During the eight days that Laura stayed there, she slept in the bedroom of her girlhood, sharing the bed with Anna Lee. She and Anna Lee had slept close together in the same bed until Laura was fifteen and Anna Lee thirteen. Even when they got separate beds, they sometimes crept in together and cuddled. Now they lay separate even in grief.



They talked, though. The night before their father died, they talked until four in the morning. Anna Lee talked about her six-year-old, Peter, an anxious, overweight child with a genius I.Q. The kid couldn't make friends; he fought all the time and was often beaten. He'd set his room on fire twice. She was talking about a psychiatrist she had taken him to see. In the light from the window, Laura could see her sister's eyelashes raising and lowering with each hard, dry blink. She could smell the lotion Anna Lee used on her face and neck. The psychiatrist had put Peter on a waiting list to go to a special school in Montana, a farm school with llamas the children could care for and ride on.

After Anna Lee stopped talking, there was a long silence. Laura could feel her sister's body become fractionally softer and more open, relaxing and concentrating at the same time. Maybe she was thinking of Peter, how he might get better, how he might grow happy and strong. Laura had met the child. He'd frowned at her and looked down at the broken toy in his hand, but there was curiosity in his mien, and he was quick to look up again. He was already fat and already bright; he seemed too sad and too angry for such a young child.

"I had a strange thought about Daddy," she said.

Anna Lee didn't answer, but Laura could feel her become alert. In the scant window light, Laura could sense that the muscles around Anna Lee's eyes had tightened. She knew she should stop, but she didn't. "It was more a picture in my head," she continued. "It was a picture of a vagina that somebody was slashing with a knife. Daddy wasn't in the picture, but—"

"Oh Christ, Laura." Anna Lee put her hands over her face and turned away. "Just stop. Why don't you just stop?"

"But I didn't mean it to be—"

"He's not your enemy now," said Anna Lee. "He's dying."

Her voice was raw and hard; she thrust it at Laura like a stick. Laura pictured her sister at twelve, yelling at some mean boys who'd cornered a cat. She felt loyalty and love. "I'm sorry," she said. Her mouth frowned, a weak, spasmodic grimace in the dark. "I'm sorry."

Anna Lee reached back and patted Laura's stomach with her fingers and half her palm. Then she withdrew into her private curl.

Laura lay awake through the night.

Anna Lee moved and scratched herself and spoke in urgent, slurred monosyllables. Laura thought of their mother, alone upstairs in the heavy sleep brought on by barbiturates. Tomorrow she would be at the stove, boiling water for Jell-O in case her husband would eat it. She didn't really believe he was dying. She knew it, but she didn't believe it.

Carefully, Laura got out of bed. She walked through the dark house until she came to her father's room. She heard him breathing before her eyes adjusted to the light. His breath was like a worn moth feebly beating against a surface. She sat in the armchair beside his bed. The electric clock said it was five-thirty. A passing car on the street filled the room with a yawning sweep of light. The wallpaper was yellow flowers. Great Aunt's old dead clock sat on the dresser. Great Aunt was her father's aunt who had raised him with her sister. Two widowed aunts and a little boy with no father. Laura could see the boy standing in the parlor, all his new life coursing through his small, stout legs and trunk. In his head was a new solar system, crackling with light as he created the planets, the novas, the sun and the moon and the stars. "Look!" he cried. "Look!" The dutiful aunts, busy with housekeeping and food, didn't see. The more he tried to show, the more they wouldn't see. The boy hesitated, and with his uncertainty his system began to break. Thrown off its trajectory, the sun became erratic, and the planets went cold. The stars burned fiercely in the cold dark, but the aunts didn't notice that, either.

Another car went by. Her father muttered and made wet noises with his mouth. She imagined him saying, "When I was broken, then they loved me."

"No wonder you hated them," said Laura softly. "No wonder."

BEHIND the reception desk there were two radios playing different stations for each secretary. One played frenetic electronic songs, the other formula love songs, and both ran together in a gross hash of sorrow and desire. This happened every afternoon by around one. Faith, who worked behind the desk, said it was easy to separate them, to just concentrate on the one you wanted. But Laura always heard both of them jabbering every time she walked by the desk.

"Martha Dillon?" She spoke the words to the waiting room. A shabby middle-aged man eyed her querulously. A red-haired middle-aged woman put down her magazine and approached Laura with a mild, obedient air. Martha was in for a physical, so Laura had to give her a preliminary before the doctor examined her. First, they stopped at the scale outside the office door; Martha took off her loafers, her socks, and her sweater, to shave off some extra ounces. A lot of women did that, and it always seemed stupid to Laura. "Five four, a hundred and twenty-six pounds," she said loudly.

"Shit," muttered Martha.

"Look at the bright side," said Laura. "You didn't gain since last time."

Martha didn't reply, but Laura sensed an annoyed little buzz from her. She was still buzzing slightly as she sat in the office; even though she was small and placid, it struck Laura that she gave off a little buzz all the time. She was forty-three years old, but her face was unlined and her eyes were wide and receptive, like a much younger person's. Her hair was obviously dyed, the way a teen-ager would do it. You could still tell she was middle-aged, though.

She didn't smoke, she exercised three times a week, she drank twice a week, wine with dinner. She was single. Her aunt had diabetes, and her mother had ovarian cancer. She had never had an operation or been hospitalized. Her periods were regular. She had never had any sexual partners. Laura blinked.

"Never?"

"No," said Martha. "Never." She looked at Laura as if she were watching for a reaction, and maybe holding back a smile.

Her blood pressure was excellent. Her pulse rate was average. Laura handled her wrist and arm with unusual care. A forty-three-year-old virgin. It was like looking at an ancient, sacred artifact, a primitive icon with its face rubbed off. It had no function or beauty, but it still felt powerful when you touched it. Laura pictured Martha walking around with a tiny red flame in the pit of her body, protecting it with her fat and muscle.

Laura felt tense as she watched the

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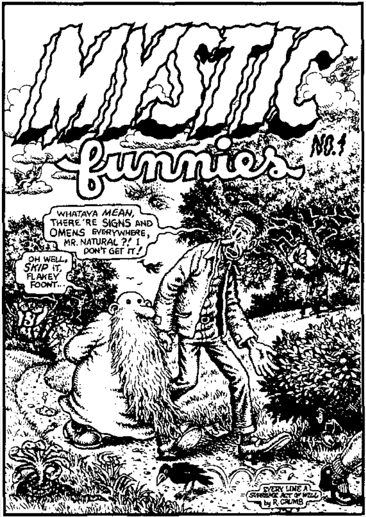
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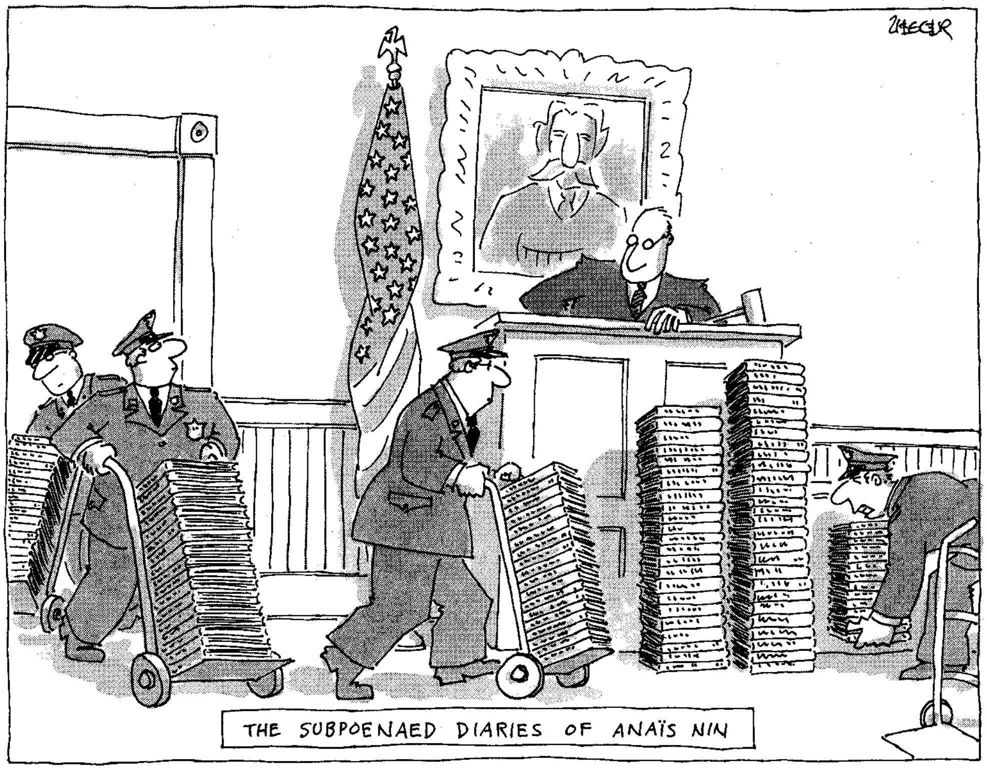

THE SUBPOENAED DIARIES OF ANAÏS NIN

doctor examine Martha, especially when he did the gynecological exam. She noticed that Martha gripped her paper gown in the fingers of one hand when the doctor sat between her legs. He had to tell her to open her legs wider three times. She lay with her head sharply turned so that she stared at a corner of the ceiling. There was a light sweat on her forehead.

When she changed back into her clothes, though, she moved as if she were in a women's locker room. She got up from the table and took off the paper gown before the doctor was even out of the room. Laura stared at her. Martha suddenly looked right at her and smiled as if she'd won something.

"She's probably really religious, or maybe she's crazy." That's what Beatrice, the secretary, thought. "In this day and age? She was probably molested when she was little."

"I don't know," said Laura. "I respected it."

Beatrice shrugged. "Well, you know, everybody has the right." She lowered her dark, heavy lashes and continued her graceful movements at her desk.

Laura imagined her father looking at the middle-aged virgin and then looking away with an embarrassed smile on his face. He might think about protecting her, about waving at her from across the street, saying "Hi, how are you," sending protection with his words. He could protect her and still keep walking, smiling to himself with embarrassed tenderness. He would have a feeling of honor and frailty, but there would be something repulsive in it, too, because she wasn't a pretty young girl. Laura remembered a minor incident in a novel she had read by a French writer, in which a teen-age boy knocked an old nun off a bridge. Her habit was heavy and so she drowned, and the writer wondered, with a stupid sort of meanness, Laura thought, whether the nun had felt shocked to have her vagina touched by cold water. She remembered a recent news story about a man who had kidnapped a little girl so that he could tie her to a tree and set a fire at the foot of the tree. Then he went to his house to watch her burn through binoculars until the police came.

Instead of going back to the waiting room, she went to the public bathroom and leaned against the small windowsill with her head in her hands. She was forty; she tried to imagine what it would be like to be a virgin. She imagined walking through the supermarket, encased in an invisible membrane that was fluid but also impenetrable, her eyes wide and staring like a doll's. Then she imagined her virginity like a strong muscle between her legs, making all her other muscles strong, making everything in her more alive, all the way up through her brains and into her bones.

She lifted her head and looked out the small window. She saw green grass and the tops of trees, cylindrical apartment buildings, and traffic. She had not wanted her virginity. She'd had to lose it with three separate people; it had been stubborn and hard to break.

She brushed the dust and particles from the windowsill off her elbows. "I was a rebellious girl," she said, "and I went in a stupid direction."

She thought of the Narcotics Anonymous meetings she had attended some years ago. People had talked about the things that had happened to them, the things they had done on drugs. Nothing had been too degrading or too pathetic or too dull. Laura had talked about trying to lose her virginity. Her friend Danielle had told a story about how she'd let a disgusting fat guy she hated try to shove a can of root beer up her vagina because, he'd suggested, they might be able to fill cans with heroin and smuggle them.

Laura smiled a little. After the meeting, she'd asked Danielle, "Who tried to stick it in, you or him?"

"Oh," said Danielle, "we both tried." They laughed.

Such grotesque humility, she thought. Such strange comfort. She remembered the paper plates of cookies, the pot of coffee on the low table in the back of the room at N.A. She loved standing back there with Danielle, eating windmill cookies and smoking. Laura looked at herself in the bathroom mirror. "A stupid girl," she said to her reflection. Well, she thought, but who could blame her?

When Laura was still a teen-ager, her mother had asked what it had been like for her to lose her virginity. She wanted to know if the experience had been "special." They had been watching TV together. It was late and the living room was dark. Laura was startled by the question. Her mother looked straight ahead while she asked it, but Laura could see her expression was unhappy. "Was it someone you loved?" she asked.

"Yes," said Laura. "Yes, it was."

"I'm glad," said her mother. She still

looked straight ahead. "I wanted you to have that." It seemed that she knew Laura was lying and that the lie was O.K. with her.

Virginity was supposed to be honorable, but who would want honor like that?

SHE went back to the waiting room and got the grouchy middle-aged man. He didn't bother to take off his shoes when she weighed him. He was there, he said, only because his wife had made him come. He had taken off work and shot the whole day. "My wife loves going to the doctor," he said. "She had all those mammograms and she lost her breast anyway. Most of it."

"Well, but it's good to come in," said Laura. "Even if it doesn't always work. You know that. Your wife's just caring about you."

He gave a conciliatory little snort. With his shirt off, he was big and flabby, but he carried it as if he liked it. His blood pressure was much too high. As she worked, Laura let her touch linger on him longer than was necessary, because she wanted to soothe him. She felt him respond to her touch; the response was like an animal turning its head to look at her, then looking away again. She thought he liked it, though.

When the man was gone, she asked Dr. Phillips if she could go outside on her break. He usually didn't like her to do that, because she was always a little late getting back when she went out, but he was trying to be extra nice since her father died. "O.K.," he said, "but watch the time." He turned and strode down the hall, habitually bristling like a small dog with a dominant nature.

Outside the heat was horrible. She started sweating right away, probably ruining her uniform for the next day. Still, she was glad to be out of the building. The clinic was situated between a busy main street and a run-down slow street occupied by an old wig shop, a children's karate gym, and a large ill-kept park where aging homeless men sat around. She decided to walk a few blocks down the park street. She liked the trees, and she was friendly with a few of the men, who sometimes wished her good afternoon.

She walked and an old song played

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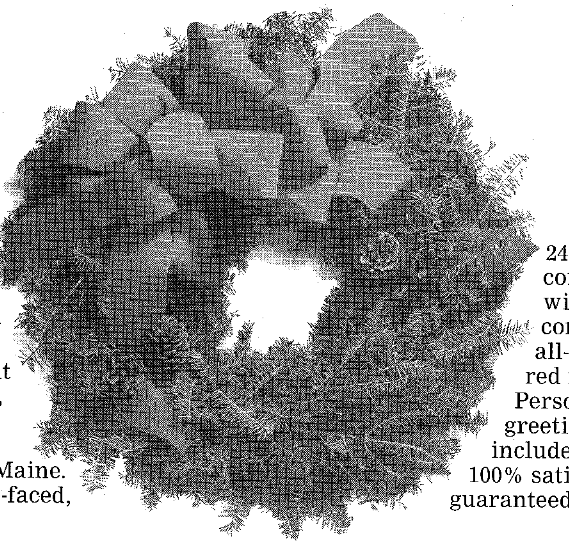

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in her head. It was the kind of old song that sounded innocent and dirty at the same time. The music was simple and shallow except for one deep spot where it was like somebody's pants were being pulled down. "You got nothing to hide and everybody knows it's true. Too bad, little girl, it's all over for you." The singer laughed and the music laughed, too, laughter spangled with pleasure and contempt.

Laura had loved the song; she had loved the thought of its being all over and everybody knowing. A lot of other people must've loved it, too; it had been a very popular song. She remembered walking down the hall in high school wearing tight clothes; boys had laughed and grabbed their crotches. They all said she'd sucked their dicks, but she'd really only screwed one of them. It didn't matter. When her father found out, he yelled and hit her.

"Was it someone special?" asked her mother. "Was it someone you loved?"

She stopped at a curb for traffic. Her body was alive with feelings that were strong but that seemed broken or incomplete, and she felt too weak to hold them.

A car pulled up beside her, throwing off motor heat. The car was full of loud teen-age boys. The driver, a Hispanic boy of about eighteen, wanted to make a right turn, but he was blocked by a stalled car in front of him and cars next to him. He was banging his horn and yelling out the window; his anger was hot and all over the place. Laura stared at him. His delicate beauty was almost too bright-lit by his youth and maleness. He had so much light that it burned him up inside and made him dark. He yelled and pounded the horn, trying to spew it out, but still it surged through him. It was like he was at war, like he could kill and kill, without any understanding in his mind or heart. In a real war, thought Laura, he would rush into danger before the other men and be called a hero. Her thought folded over unexpectedly, and she pictured him as a baby with his small mouth on his mother's breast. She pictured his fierce nature deep inside him, like dark, beautiful seeds feeding off his mother's milk, off the feel of her hand on his skull. She thought of him now with a girl; he would kiss her too hard and be rough, wanting her to feel what he had inside him, wanting to show it to her.

He turned in his seat to shout something to the other boys in the car, then turned forward again to put his head out the window to curse the other cars. He turned again and saw Laura staring at him. Their eyes met. She thought of her father showing his aunts the stars and all the planets. You are good, she thought. What you have is good. The boy dropped his eyes in confusion. There was a yell from the back seat. The stalled car leapt forward. The boy snapped around, hit the gas, and was off.

Laura crossed the street. She thought, I told him he was good. I told him with my eyes and he heard me. She flinched under a second of embarrassment—to think that she could give that guy anything he might want! But then she thought of the middle-aged virgin jumping off the examining table and smiling as if she'd won something, and she felt O.K. again.

She walked up the block sweating, and grateful without knowing why. Again, she pictured the middle-aged virgin, this time at home at night, doing her meticulous toilet, rubbing her feet with softening cream. She pictured herself at home, curled on the couch, watching TV and eating ice cream out of the carton. She pictured the men in her dream, fighting. She pictured herself kneeling beside the handsome man. She would pass her hand over his broken skull and make an impenetrable membrane grow over his exposed brain. The membrane would be transparent, and you would be able to see his brain glowing inside it like magic stones. But you could never cut it or harm it. She pictured her father, young and strong, smiling at her, the planets all around him.

Deep in the park, she saw the homeless men moving about, their figures nearly obscured by overgrown grass and trees. For a moment she strained to see them more clearly, then gave up. It was time to go back; she was late. ♦

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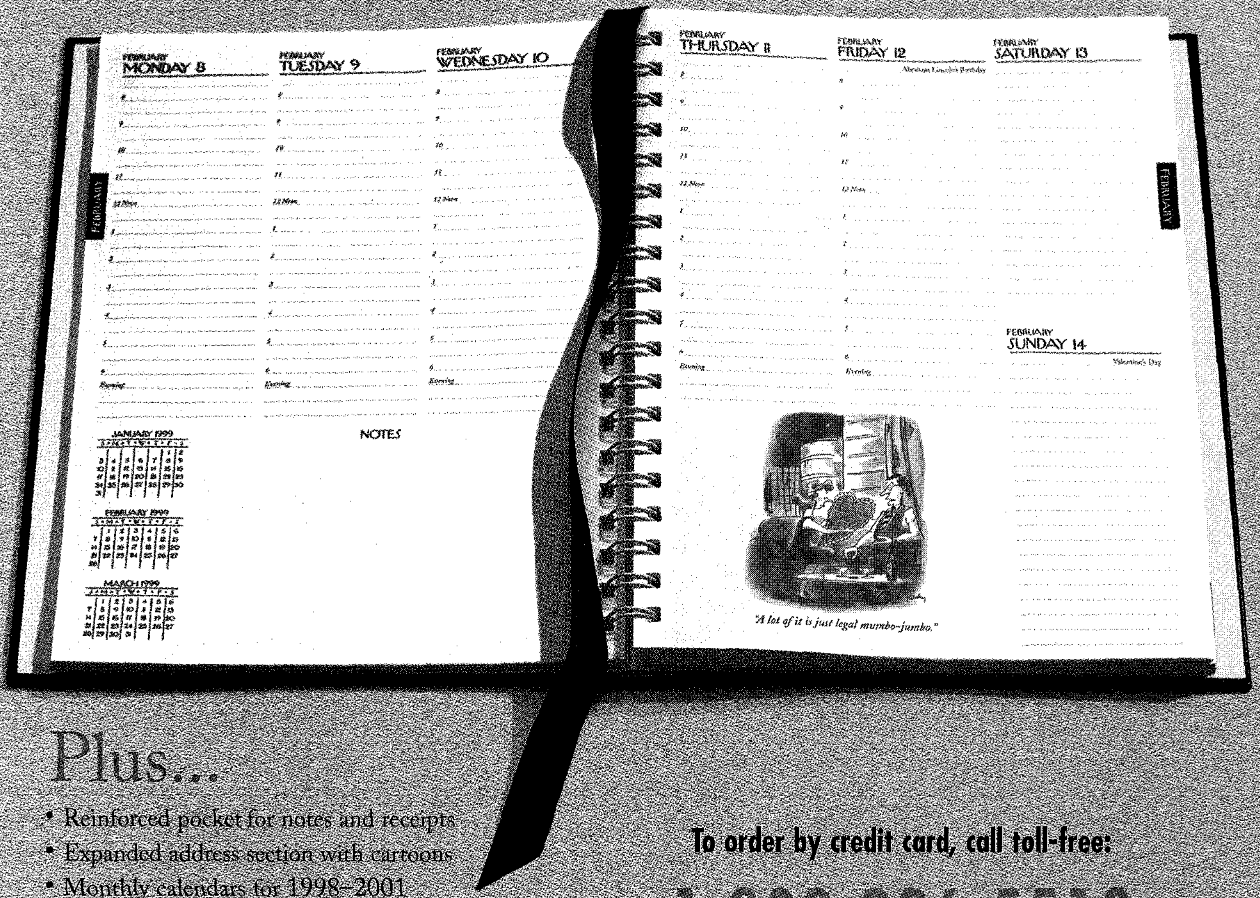
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

UNDER HIS SKIN

The real Cole Porter was anything but cool.

BY WILFRID SHEED

THE scene changes, but there always seems to be room at the top for Cole Porter. A half century after his last song was published, his jokes still click and his tunes lilt and the mere mention of his name can make people smile. Most surprisingly, his love songs still work, sociobiologically speaking. Evolution doesn't know much about music, and even less about interior rhymes, but it does like to keep those babies coming, and a Porter song can still jump-start the process as well as anything. Whether you're in the market for a "let's get married" song or a "let's not wait to get married" one, you can't do better than a Cole Porter tape playing in the back of the canoe, the limousine, or even the pickup.

One reason Porter has lasted so long may be that there actually seem to be two of him out there, dividing the chores. The Cole of anecdote is an impenetrably cool, unromantic chap who never takes off his smoking jacket, wouldn't be caught dead in a pickup truck, and writes only sophisticated songs. But Cole II is almost his opposite—an emotional sot, who wavers between sentimentality and genuine passion but altogether clinches Cole Porter's claim to being a great songwriter, and not just the cleverest college boy in American history.

Porter insiders have tried to explain away such unsophisticated fluff as "Don't Fence Me In" and "Rosalie" by saying that they were written purely for money, as if, for the right price, even Cole Porter was willing to be corny. But the disclaimers shouldn't stop there. "True Love," in "High Society," is so corny it makes you want to crawl under your chair, prior to settling down immediately in a cottage for two where the roses bloom. And there are enough others, good and bad, in the warm-and-fuzzy file to constitute a career for most writers: "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To" and "Do I Love You (Do I)?" and much, much more.

Turning to the hot-and-bothered file, one finds something even less like the mannequin with the cigarette holder—to wit, a devastating lack of coolness and protective irony. Porter's noble little masterpiece "After You, Who?" must be, words and music, one of the most emotionally naked songs ever written—a wild cry from the heart—and it sounds a note that recurs again and again. "Hold my hand and swear / You'll never cease to care / For without you there what could I do?" Note that nothing has even happened yet, but the singer can't wait to be abandoned: he's already heartbroken over the mere possibility. Although everything seems O.K. for now, how is one to know whether this is "the good turtle soup" or "just one of those things"? And whatever it is, will it "fade out of sight" on "gossamer wings"?

Anyone so vulnerable needs a carapace, or a smoking jacket, if only to protect his sales. In Porter's time, the general public didn't know a homosexual from the Father of the Bride, so he was able to hide his gay self inside an even gayer persona, wrap it all up in an acceptable marriage, and pass the whole rigmarole off as a reasonable facsimile of Cary Grant, who played him in the hilarious movie "Night and Day." Now that we know everything, and can explain everything, too, there's no place left to hide the fact that those love songs were indeed written by not just a gay man but an over-the-top gay man, as his new biographer, William McBrien, documents, exhaustively, in "Cole Porter: A Biography" (Knopf; $30), an instant reference book to be used instantly.

Although some of his songs, like "I've Got You Under My Skin," may begin in sexual heat, the fever typically wars with and finally yields to something quite thrillingly tranquil and universally attractive—eggs and bacon or a seat by the fire. And even when the words don't find this kind of peace, as in "Get out of town (before it's too late, my love)," the melody goes ahead and makes a separate peace anyhow. "The thrill when we meet is so bittersweet that, darling, it's getting me down": the words solve nothing, but the notes could be wedding bells. It's these musical phrases, just as much as his lyrics, that most clearly identify a song as Cole Porter's. His tunes, at least, all have happy endings: the mood they arouse is satisfied, and everyone drives or rows home contented, regardless of sex. The proof is that when the crowd around the piano calls for something by Cole Porter they'll enjoy it whether the man at the keyboard sings the words or not.

So what did Porter have in common with his audience? McBrien's evidence suggests that the answer may be as simple as the lyrics of his song "Let's Do It." Cole Porter spent an awful lot of time falling in love, a hobby he pursued as ardently as a teen-ager long after most married men have conquered the habit, and after even his famous overeducated fleas and electric eels would have packed it in. And each new lover seems to have been an occasion for song, as he would "concentrate" on this one and keep his "eyes on" that one and experience yet again the torment of breaking up and the joy of starting over almost with the speed of a swinging door. In fact, it seems that Porter sometimes wrote his love letters and his lyrics in the same giddy, boozy rush, which is why the love songs seem so real. And if the songs couldn't name whom he loved, or even precisely what, they could certainly say how much, expressing his passion with a gusto that simply blows away such contemporaries as Ira Gershwin and Oscar Hammerstein. "Only make believe," Hammerstein writes, and "Come to papa—come to papa—do," Gershwin writes, and a couple of powerful tunes are slightly weakened. But Porter writes, "The light in your eyes when you surrender," and the tune picks up enough steam to drive home on triumphantly.

But where is the smoking jacket

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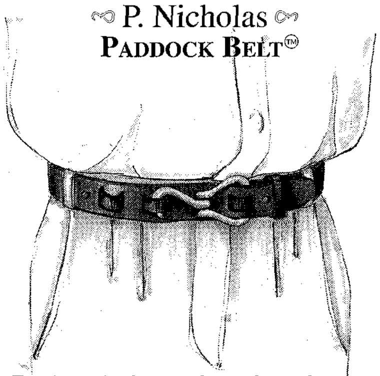

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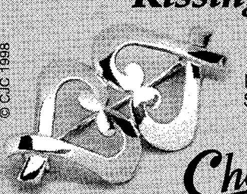

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amidst all this rumpus? Probably hanging next to Fred Astaire's top hat and tails. Neither of these Midwestern masters of sophistication was born that way—and Astaire could play the part only on the stage and on the screen. Between gigs, he remained a lifelong hayseed, and so did an important part of Porter.

Geniuses don't let anything go; they just add stuff. As a mythical neighbor from Cole's home town, Peru (pronounced *Pea*-roo), Indiana, might put it, different folks have different ways of coping with the Big City. Porter's fellow-Hoosier Hoagy Carmichael, who had in real life been a university man, a law-school graduate, and a snappy dresser, elected to go the good-old-boy route, becoming more down home than he'd ever been back in Bloomington. But Porter preferred to beat the slickers at their own game, by being more Yale than Dink Stover, more New York than Eustace Tilley, and much more Parisian than Ernest Hemingway. "Don't Fence Me In" was absolutely genuine. Up to a point.

ROLLING it all back to the beginning, one finds in McBrien's book an overpowering mother, who force-feeds her son on the arts, and a shadowy, withdrawn father. But the wrinkle is that it was Cole's father, Sam Porter, who had the artistic interests, including a passion for English Romantic poetry and an indeterminate skill on the guitar. The affable Sam left such matters as Cole's education entirely up to his wife, Kate, not necessarily from indifference but because it was really a question of deciding what schools his rich father-in-law, J. O. Cole, could be talked into paying for, and Sam had no say in this. Like her father, Kate Porter had nothing much to offer genetically, besides a blind drive to succeed, and if music was the way for her son to accomplish that, so be it. She would see to it that the kid was stuffed like a goose with piano and violin lessons.

The regimen might have crushed a normal child, but Cole thrived on it. McBrien reports that, by the age of eight, Cole had bounced onto the stage of the local movie house and been bounced off again for playing inappropriate music. And not long after that we find him committing the same offense in a wet bathing suit on one of the local lake boats before escaping over the side into the water. In short, Cole's drive to show off was just as powerful as his grandfather's drive to make money, and his childhood was less like that of a hothouse plant than "Tom Sawyer" set to music.

By the time Cole left Peru for boarding school, he had become a veteran entertainer both at the cinema and on the lake boats. And he had discovered something else useful: friendship, which he would swiftly make into an art form. McBrien, in his most interesting pages, describes Cole's intense love for a girl named Desdemona Bearss, the first of several female friends who helped stabilize his life. Women as such were guaranteed not to get too hot not to cool down, so he could indulge in the exotic pleasures of constancy with them.

By the time he arrived at Yale, in 1909, all he needed was a piano and an audience, and he could invent his personality as a mixture of mascot and court jester, Puck and Yorick, both sexes and none—a Michael Jackson for the carriage trade. And by linking the socials and theatricals at Yale with his own vaudeville circuit he could match his street-smart friend Irving Berlin song for song, even if the subjects *were* bulldogs and Shakespeare. How far he still was from Broadway he learned when he took his stuff there, in a 1915 musical called "See America First," and it sank without a trace. But he had a target now and a mission in life.

PART of Cole never left Yale, and his door would always stay open to Old Elis, be they ever so boring, and to Peruvians, too, as if his art demanded that he keep in touch with dull people as well as bright ones. But it's hard to read his artistic intentions, because by the time he left Yale and had taken a music degree at Harvard he had absorbed the first law of the Wasp gentleman, which is never to be seen either working or crying. His life became a round of inscrutable frivolity, and when the First World War took him to Paris, in 1917, he behaved as though he'd been invited to a fancy-dress party. His friend Monty Woolley said that Cole wore a different uniform every night as he hopped from group to group, looking for ways to stay in Paris. And it was there, amid the forged identities and phony résumés of war, that Cole really hit his stride as a fabulist and self-creator. If he could pretend to be straight, why not claim to have fought in the French Foreign Legion as well? Would a Croix de Guerre be going too far? Some commentators have dismissed the whole masquerade as neurotic escapism, but Cole was having too much fun to go in for that: he was trying on different faces for the real party that was about to follow. In recordings of his that have survived, you can almost hear the hum of the non-stop party in some of the funny ones, and picture Cole smiling at the keyboard as he knocks the Smart Set dead, night after night, wherever the party has just moved to. The Eternal Preppy has seen Paree now, knows all about gigolos and cocottes, and serenades them in a cosmopolitan style much closer to Noël Coward's than to Irving Berlin's. And between sets he starts falling in love faster and faster, deeper and shallower, stirring in enough booze to crack up the average American in Paris—or, at least, slow him down.

But not Cole. In a surprising but wise move, he kicked off the twenties by marrying a woman with a genius for appearances. Bernard Berenson claimed that Linda Lee Thomas, a rich divorcée, had perfect taste in absolutely everything—including, obviously, amusing second husbands. Richard Rodgers, in his 1975 autobiography "Musical Stages," suggests that she herself was somehow perfect, too—an art object worth collecting in her own right. Cole proceeded to use his wife as a safety brake by insisting on the Jane Austen-like condition that all his potential lovers first make friends with her. It would be a mistake to leap from this to the cliché, circulated by the Porters' friends, that Linda was simply his mother all over again. McBrien's evidence suggests that Cole generally preferred to worship his mother at a slight distance. But Linda was like Desdemona Bearss—his dream girlfriend and companion. In that quintessential period piece "The Sun Also Rises," Lady Brett Ashley daydreams about how great she and Jake Barnes might have been together, and the impotent Jake famously answers, "Isn't it pretty to think so?" Linda was one of Cole's prettiest thoughts. Indomitably cool and lovely, she could serve perfectly as Cole's muse of eggs and bacon and everything else that might be nice for himself and his songs "to come home to" after the fiery tortures of love.

And Linda could also serve as a beard for his ferocious work habits: *she* was the one who made him write all those songs. In fact Linda wanted Cole to become a serious composer, not a songwriter at all, and he cheerfully went along with this detour, studying counterpoint, harmony, and orchestration at the élite Schola Cantorum and scoring a ballet that earned respectful notices in Paris.

But no matter how hard Porter pretended to look the other way, he never really took his eye off Broadway. Both his ear and his curiosity must have told him that his natural rivals there—George Gershwin and Jerome Kern—were also classically trained musicians and that the harmony he was learning at the Schola Cantorum might not be so far away from the Broadway sound he was looking for.

Thus, under cover of the high life, Porter polished his songs to the familiar gleam, and sent them off quietly to New York and London, where they gradually began to catch on a bit, then suddenly a lot, until by the end of the twenties Cole Porter had been thoroughly discovered as a mysteriously accomplished Broadway professional, who also happened to be a playboy in exile. Cole had worked so hard on his anecdotal self that his image arrived before his songs.

IN 1926, Porter's worlds of work and play collided with a small bang when Noël Coward, who epitomized both worlds, introduced him to Richard Rodgers. Cole announced his wish to write "Jewish tunes." The year before, Gershwin had blown through Paris, playing pianos everywhere he went and, by example, showing Cole the element he would need to catch the new Broadway sound. Later, using the same code, Rodgers acknowledged that Porter had wound up writing "the most enduring 'Jewish' music" of anyone.

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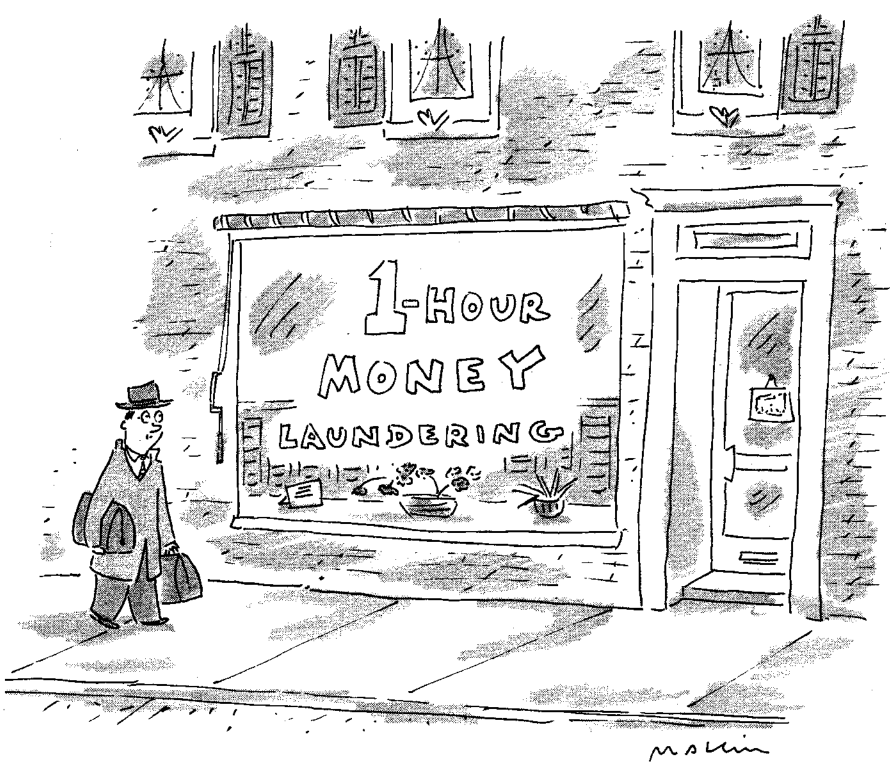

and black—full of key changes "from major to minor" and latent syncopation. In 1929, he got it just right with "You Do Something to Me," and was ready to start volleying "Jewish" songs back and forth with Rodgers so effectively that Gershwin himself had to run to catch up. In his memoir "A Smattering of Ignorance" Oscar Levant reports that Gershwin took his fateful last trip to Hollywood, in 1936, expressly to regain his lead from his two disciples, with results that would enhance the American song still further. That year, Porter wrote "I've Got You Under My Skin." Gershwin answered: "They Can't Take That Away from Me." It never got any better than that.

By then, Cole had come a long way from Paris; unfortunately Linda Porter had not. Although she had been the perfect European wife, Cole had done Europe now, and there was no part written for her over here. Perhaps the Porters still made some kind of sense in the semi-European city of New York, where Cole spent most of the early thirties, repatriating himself and writing ever more Broadway musicals, from the still Englishy "Gay Divorce" (1932) to the more American "Anything Goes" (1934).

In Los Angeles, their next port of call, the Porters made no sense at all. Hollywood, in that pre-Las Vegas dawn, was still the world capital of vulgarity, and Linda's love of appearances, both social and aesthetic, must have been affronted by every sight and sound. Cole, on the other hand, thought Hollywood the funniest joke there ever was, a sublime parody of the land he loved, and to hell with sophistication. In 1935, he signed a contract with MGM, and dove right in. Everyone in Hollywood was beautiful, and everyone was tied up at the moment, so romances lasted no longer than shooting schedules. Cole dispensed with the charade of introducing his lovers to Linda, leaving her to keep up appearances by herself. It was a game she continued to play so conscientiously that to this day people don't know whether she had any sex life, or, if so, of what kind. Cole's behavior was startlingly cruel, and he probably knew it. The fickleness that so tormented him had always been his own, and from then on his dealings with Linda were a heartbreaking mixture of icy detachment and unflagging solicitousness.

Finally, in the summer of 1937, Linda offered to put them out of their mutual misery by telling him to choose between Hollywood and her. "How'm

I ridin'?" he wrote around then. "I'm ridin' high." Maybe, at that crest of fame and confidence, he might have faced down his fears of abandonment and given her a divorce. But, before he could decide, a real horse, on which he was literally riding high at the Piping Rock Club one day on Long Island, decided the question for him by falling and then rolling over both Cole's legs, like a hit man making sure.

So Linda stayed. She looked old enough to be his mother now, and her first decision as such was that Cole's legs not be amputated, for the sake of his pride. Cole's attitude toward his situation is best summed up by the report he gave out that as he lay under the horse he worked on the lyrics to "At Long Last Love." Defiance was the word: in the song "Friendship," he wrote, "If they ever put a bullet through your brr-ain, / I'll complain. . . . If you're ever . . . sawed in half, / I won't laugh." To which one can only add, "If I ever lose a leg / I won't beg"—for sympathy, anyway.

"HAPPY people don't need to have fun," the late Jean Stafford used to intone on bad mornings. Cole needed to have fun, as McBrien reports with his usual amplitude. Meanwhile, Cole's other pain medicine—work—would produce such wartime gems as "I Love You (Hums the April Breeze)" and "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," but also several weak shows that, briefly, excited the vultures: clearly, the old boy was losing it. Next customer, please.

But the joke was on the vultures. "Kiss Me, Kate," which opened on Broadway in December of 1948, was not just a comeback but a great leap forward on all fronts. Since the plot concerned some Americans putting on "The Taming of the Shrew," Porter seized the opportunity to divide the songs into two kinds: he gave the actors some jazzy and beat-driven numbers to sing on their own time ("Too Darn Hot," "Why Can't You Behave?") and some operettalike ones ("Where Is the Life That Late I Led," "Were Thine That Special Face") to insert in the inner play, then added a few subdivisions of both categories before wrapping up the whole adventure in a swirl of timeless, Shakespearean-sounding joy: "Now thou shall ever be, now thou shall ever be mine . . . and I am thine, all thine," as if the composer himself were laughing in triumph at pulling off this caper.

Safely back at the top, Porter resumed his stately rivalry with Rodgers through a few more shows, such as "Can-Can" (1953) and "Silk Stockings" (1955), and the movie "High Society" (1956)—though he was the one writing all the "Jewish" songs now, Rodgers having long since defected to fifties suburbanism. Porter songs like "It's All Right with Me" and "You're Sensational" still sound as if the thirties had never ended. As, indeed, they hadn't yet, if you didn't want them to.

How Cole would have coped with the sixties we'll never know, because by then Miss Otis had sent her last regrets. Painkillers and pain itself had finally done what wild horses had failed to do, effectively silencing him. Thenceforth any entertainment would have to come from his dinner guests, whom he now invited just two at a time, to stare at blankly.

Yet it is in that last, sad silence, which one imagines broken by the scraping of chairs as his manservant tries to hoist him from the table while nobody's looking, that one gets a chance to consider what we lost when Cole Porter died, mercifully, in 1964. This man had lived every moment of his life as fully and humanly as a life can be lived, and this—after the myths have been put away for the night—may be the reason the songs still work. They have a pulse, as if someone were still in there—someone who has been places no songwriter had been before. In a strange, throwaway ending, McBrien mentions that, although Porter had insisted there be no eulogy, or fuss, at his funeral, he made two exceptions. He wanted the Lord's Prayer recited, and he wanted the verse that states Christianity's central proposition read: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me . . . shall never die." Cole Porter with a spiritual life? It would have seemed rude and humorless to bring it up at the time. ◆

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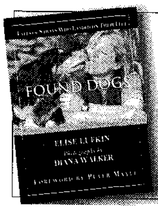

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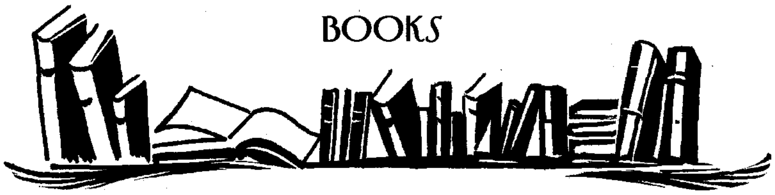


BOOKS

INTO THE WILD

All you need to be a great Victorian explorer is courage, recklessness—and a wife who will put up with it.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Sir Richard Francis Burton—explorer, anthropologist, linguist, erotologist, universal genius—could easily have turned up as a character in a Joseph Conrad novel. Not as one of those passive characters, a plaything of fate to whom terrible things happen, although, God knows, terrible things did happen to Burton. And not as one of those observant characters who are given the burden of returning to tell the story, although Burton himself wrote scores of books, many of them based on his adventures. Burton was, instead, one of those obsessed, really quite dangerous characters, such as Charles Gould in "Nostromo," or even Kurtz in "Heart of Darkness." A man with a perpetual itch for action, he was a figure of controversy all his life, and, even now, more than a century after he died—in 1890, at the age of sixty-nine—his reputation is far from settled.

Richard Burton may not have been the most eminent of all the Victorians but he was in many ways the most impressive. Victorianism is, of course, inseparable from empire, the idea and the reality. Yet, though Burton's magnificent career was played out against an imperial background, he was far from a darling of the imperial establishment. He was an officer in the Bombay army of the British East India Company; many of his travels were underwritten by the Royal Geographic Society; and he spent the better part of his career as a British consul (in Fernando Po, in Santos, in Damascus, in Trieste), under the auspices of the British Foreign Office. At each of these institutions, he was viewed as a difficult character, which he most assuredly was; and at none did he feel himself properly appreciated, which he most assuredly wasn't. Sir Arnold Wilson, the Orientalist, once said of Burton, "Honour, not Honours, was his life's ambition." But in fact he wanted both—Honour and Honours—and this was only one of his problems.

Consider Richard Burton's accomplishments: he knew some twenty-nine foreign languages and at least a dozen dialects, and at one point tried to learn the language of monkeys. He was the first non-Muslim to make a successful pilgrimage to Mecca posing as one of the faithful, and the first to penetrate the ancient kingdom of Harar, in Somalia. He was the first Westerner to discover Lake Tanganyika, in an attempt to find the source of the Nile. He served as a spy in peacetime India and as an officer in the Crimean War. He prospected for gold in Egypt, West Africa, and Brazil. He wrote what is thought to be the best book on sword fighting of the nineteenth century. He introduced the word "safari" into the English language and is said to have introduced Turkish delight to Europe. He was one of the earliest translators of the "Kama Sutra" and of the "Arabian Nights," and he also wrote poems in the manner of the classics of Arabic literature. A passage from one of them, "The Kasidah of Haji Abdu El-Yezdi," might stand as his epitaph:

> Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none but self expect applause;
> He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his self-made laws.
> All other Life is living Death, a world where none but Phantoms dwell,
> A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling of the camel-bell.

Alan Moorehead, in "The White Nile" (1960), says of Burton, "Despite the plethora of books that have been written either by or about him, he still remains beyond the range of ordinary definition." The latest stab at definition is made in "A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton," a substantial new work by Mary S. Lovell

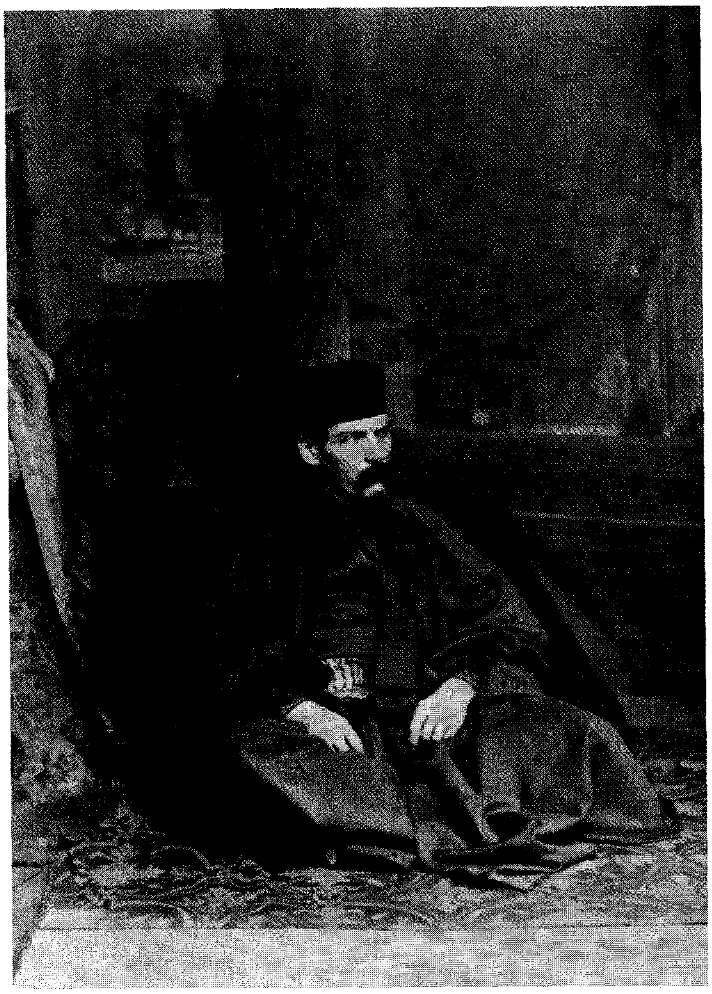
(Norton; $39.95), who is also the author of biographies of Beryl Markham and Amelia Earhart. Lovell's concentration on Burton's marriage, based on his wife's diaries and papers, shows him in a new and even more interesting light. Burton was not an introspective man, but in his wife's writings his inner thoughts—the slights he suffered, the rewards he yearned for and never received—are registered with striking clarity. Burton now seems somewhat less rebarbative and less two-dimensional—more human, if never quite humane. "A Rage to Live" is not without its longueurs—the most notable being the laborious sorting out of rival claimants to Burton's discoveries in Central Africa—but it is the kind of book that sets up to be an arbiter of earlier studies of its subject. This is no small job, since people seem to have written new biographies of Burton roughly every decade. The book also expends much of its effort on defending first Richard Burton and then Isabel Burton from the many accusations and flamboyant interpretations that assailed them in life and have stalked them in death.

Lovell's defense is, for the most part, persuasive. She comes armed with new archival findings, among them seven boxes of material belonging to Isabel Burton, whom Lovell defends against the accusation that she mindlessly burned her husband's papers after his death. Although very much in the Burtons' corner, Lovell never lapses into hagiography. "At all stages of his career," she writes, "he was apt to cover uncertainty with a display of aggressive bravura to which others reacted variously with fear, irritation and dislike." Knowing her subjects' weaknesses—their through-the-roof self-evaluations, their extraordinary propensity for dramatization—does not stop her from admiring their strengths.

Lovell's biography is really a love story, but it begins—as, inevitably, it must—with an account of Burton and his background, character, and early achievements. The fully formed and already heroic Burton was the man whom the still girlish Isabel Arundell fell in love with and determined to marry. He was eventually to be compared to such figures in the English pantheon of romance as Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake; Isabel would have argued that he was much greater than either, and she might have been right.

Yet Burton was not entirely an Englishman, having grown up mainly in France and Italy. In 1822, his father, Joseph Burton, had been required to stand down from military service, and had been put on half pay, allegedly because he refused to testify against Queen Caroline, the cast-off wife of King George IV, who was accused of scandalous behavior in Italy. Burton, fearful of his worsening asthma in the dank English climate, took his family abroad, where they lived on the income from his father-in-law's estate.

Thus Richard Burton missed out on an English public-school education, though not for want of prodigious intelligence: he learned to play chess blind-



Burton's abilities as a soldier were dazzling, but his penchant for going native and for erotic experimentation aroused suspicion.

LEFT: HULTON GETTY/LIAISON; RIGHT: GRANGER COLLECTION

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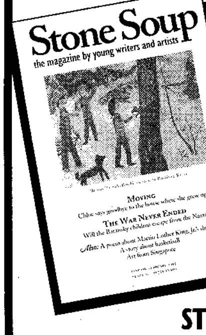

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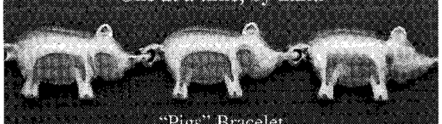

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folded and, at fourteen, was able to beat four opponents simultaneously. When he finally went to study in England (at Trinity College Oxford), he lasted only five terms, getting sent down for attending a steeplechase, against school regulations. He would always seem an outsider, no matter where he was. Without a home, "some little corner of the Great World which takes pride in your exploits," as he himself once put it, "you are a waif, a stray; you are a blaze of light without a focus."

His family's rootlessness can have only stimulated the young Richard's astonishing aptitude for acquiring new languages. Arabic wasn't taught at Oxford, so he taught himself, sped along by his own techniques for learning new tongues:

> I got a simple grammar and vocabulary, marked out the forms and words which I knew were absolutely necessary, and learned them by heart by carrying them in my pocket and looking over them at spare moments during the day. I never worked more than a quarter of an hour at a time, for after that the lesson lost its freshness. After learning some 300 words, easily done in a week, I stumbled through some easy book-work . . . and underlined every word I wished to recollect. . . . If I came across a new sound like the Arabic *Ghayn* I trained my tongue to it by repeating it so many thousand times a day.

Burton's facility—and his felicity—with languages was at the heart of his career as a soldier and explorer. Early in his posting in India, he regularly took Army examinations in Hindustani, Gujarati, Persian, and other languages and invariably finished first among his competitors. One of his native tutors in India, quoted by Lovell, said that he was "a man who could learn languages running." He was also said to be the best horseman and the finest swordsman in the British military.

In almost anyone else such stunning abilities would have led to a glittering military career. But Burton's ambitions were always hobbled by his hauteur, which, in a nice reversal of snobbery, he turned not on his inferiors but on his superiors. He was never at a loss for finding more than adequate ways to inform those above him of his contempt for them. When he was sent down from Oxford, for example, Burton rode a tandem-driven dog cart through his college master's much adored flower garden. In India, he made it fairly plain that he thought his superior officers had gained their jobs not through ability but through connections and made little effort to disguise his extreme boredom with their social rituals and the way of life of the English in India generally. "He never seemed to learn that it was not possible to publicly bait his superiors without making enemies of them," Lovell writes.

Burton also aroused contemporary mistrust by "going native," to the point of taking an Indian mistress—eventually, several Indian mistresses. Apart from other comforts, these women gave him much help with Hindustani and, he claimed, a feeling for "the syntaxes of native Life." They also earned him among his fellow English officers the epithet of "the white nigger." Burton was an early sexologist, greatly interested in sensual experience and in the various ways that sex was regarded and practiced in different cultures. In this field, he was widely believed to have been what we now call a "participant observer." (He is thought to have contracted syphilis in Africa, and Lovell suggests that this may be why he and his wife had no children.)

Going native had the important—and, for Burton, happy—consequence of allowing him to function as a spy for the British among the often seditious factions of India. He loved to play "the Great Game," as spying in India was then called. The Great Game was also a serious game: British officers caught at it were killed instantly. But Burton was too good, too crafty, to be caught. He loved the disguise, the dressing up, and, not least, the danger. He created a character for himself called Mizra Abdullah the Bushiri, a half-Iranian, half-Arabic seller of fine linen, and, to make this character believable, learned every detail of custom and behavior suitable to the part, down to the proper walk and the right manner of humming.

Burton's most audacious work in the line of disguise came in 1853, with his pilgrimage to Medina and Mecca, at the successful conclusion of which he became the first European, and the first infidel, to enter the sacred city of Mecca as "one of the people." Discovery, he believed, would mean death; so, in his early thirties, he had himself circumcised, lest a view of him naked give him away. His disguise was so complete that, Lovell re-

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marks, "he almost forgot he was English."

Before going to Mecca, Burton had learned to recite something like a quarter of the Koran from memory. He had studied—and imaginatively insinuated himself inside—Arab Muslim culture with a penetration that has today impressed even as stringent a critic of Western Orientalists as Edward Said: "In no writer on the Orient so much as Burton do we feel that generalizations about the Oriental . . . are the result of knowledge acquired about the Orient by living there, actually seeing it firsthand, truly trying to see Oriental life from the viewpoint of a person immersed in it."

Burton had hoped to emerge from this adventure with anthropological knowledge of the Arab world, with knowledge of prospects for trading horses between India and Arabia, and with personal knowledge of the emotions of the pilgrim upon entering a sacred place. Never unmindful of money, he also wanted to produce a best-seller based on his journey. What he ended up with was a book that bore the accurate but rather stilted title of "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah," and that did not sell very well in his lifetime.

Nevertheless, the book remains an extraordinary achievement, revealing much about Arab culture and psychology, and nearly as much about its author. Burton emerges as a man able to tolerate enormous squalor, chaos, and hardship. At the same time, he is lordly in his general perspective—recognizing the grandeur of both the highly civilized and the putatively barbarian, detesting the half civilized above all.

Here and in his other writings, Burton comes across as imperious without being imperial. He abominated slavery. He was kind to animals but could treat human suffering with a cold irony. Tropical climates, desert country, uncharted territory generally pleased, even calmed, him. "Startling the sudden change from presto to adagio life!" he writes as his ship leaves European for North African waters.

Burton's wanderlust was genuine and lifelong. When it was suggested to him that he must be sick of travelling, he replied, "When old, I intend to take a permanent passage in some old steamer and go round and round the world till I die." He was also a man who thrived on dan-

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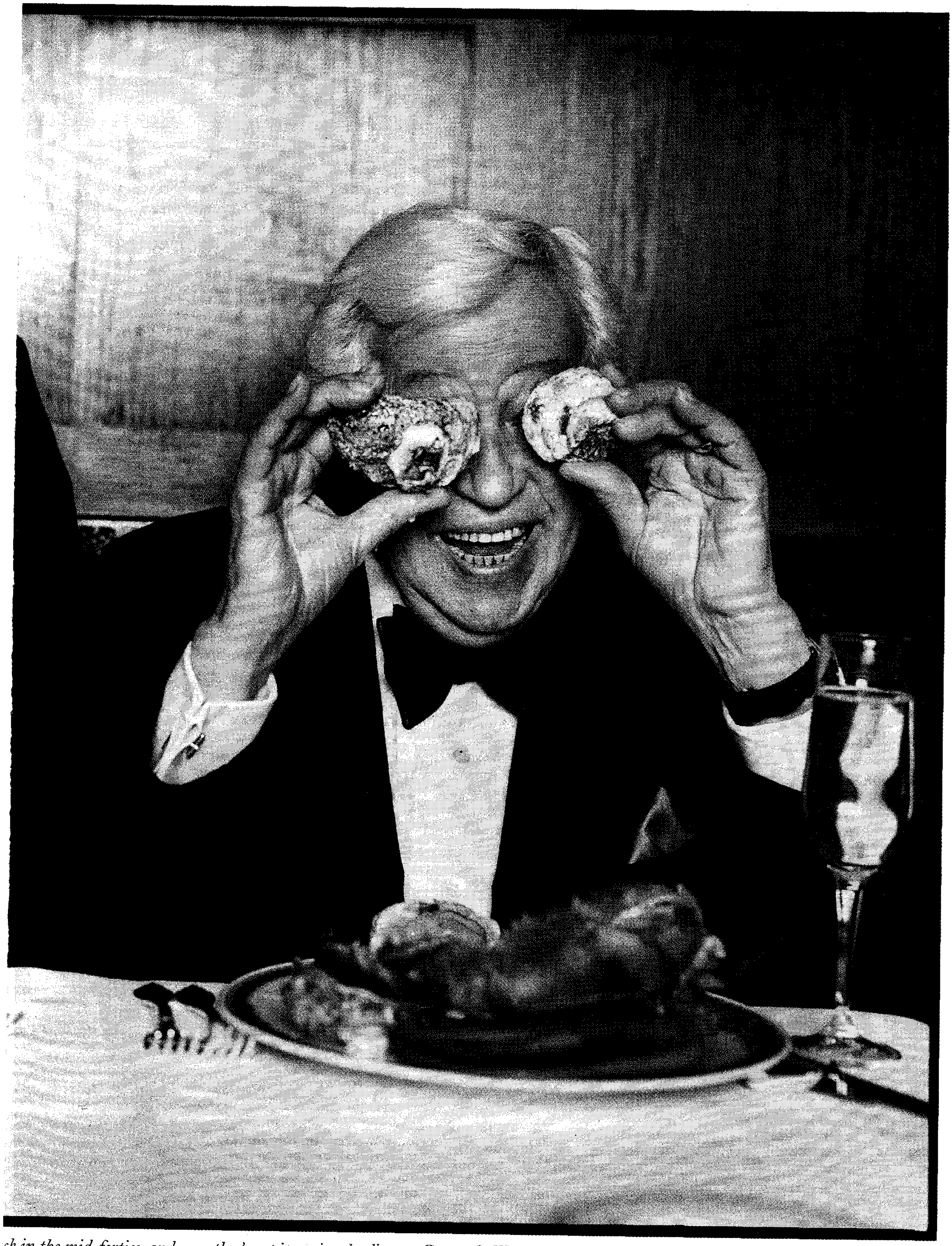
ger. If sedition was in the offing anywhere in the British Empire, if a war was being fought, he asked the Foreign Office to send him there, even though he once remarked, "I confess to holding the British policeman to be, like the beefsteak, a bore, a world-wide nuisance." For him, the empire was far from sacred; instead, it was little more than an ample gymnasium in which he worked out his extraordinary conception of himself as a man of action.

SUCH a man was scarcely the most eligible of bachelors. Burton earned little money and had poor prospects of making more. He had a reputation for being an unstable and rather off-color character: another name coined for him by his fellow-officers was Ruffian Dick. During the first of his African adventures, he was badly scarred by a Berber spear, which cut through one cheek and into his mouth, turning his formerly fierce look into a slightly terrifying one. This didn't stop him from proposing marriage to three different women, or them from refusing him.

Nor did it stop the twenty-year-old Isabel Arundell, the daughter of an aristocratic Catholic family, from deciding upon first meeting him, in 1851, that Richard Burton, ten years her senior, was the only man she could possibly marry. Something of a fantast, enraptured by the East, and given to belief in magic and prophecy, Isabel had her horoscope cast by a Gypsy, whose name happened to be Burton, and who told her, "You will be as we are, but far greater than we are. Your life is all wandering, change, and adventure. One soul in two bodies in life or death, never long apart."

Five years passed before they were secretly engaged and five more before she eloped to London with him, in 1861. She had decided to wait things out, hoping that love would triumph over all obstacles. As she came to know him better, she wrote in her journal, "I find in him a depth of feeling, a generous heart, and because, though brave as a lion, he is yet a gentle, delicate, sensitive nature, and the soul of honour. . . . I would at this moment sacrifice and leave all to follow his fortunes, were it his wish or for his good." This she did, despite the objections of her family, who were worried not only because Burton was not a Catholic but, perhaps as

TOASTS OF THE TOWN *Betty Comden and Adolph Green started cutting up on Broadwa*
version of "On the Town," for which they wrote the book and lyrics. Along with such shows



ck in the mid-forties, and now they're at it again: the director George C. Wolfe has revived their special brand of buoyancy in a streamlined 'onderful Town" and "Bells Are Ringing," it established the duo as architects of the Manhattan-as-playground myth. Photograph by Max Vadukul.

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important, because Burton was Burton.

Unlucky though Richard Burton may have been in his social connections, his temperament, and his talent for acquiring enemies in the wrong places, he was immensely lucky in his marriage. Isabel was fearless and idealistic (she had wanted to join Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, but Nightingale accepted only married women), and sought a cause larger than herself. In Richard she found that cause, and it gave meaning to her life. She saw herself as, in her own words, "the humble little steam tug . . . glorying in her proud and stately ship." No one could have found a better helpmate than Richard Burton found in Isabel Arundell.

She was his ceaseless defender and his closest friend. Born to luxury, she trained herself to be a poor man's wife by practicing small economies. She was an excellent equestrian. She took lessons in fencing, so that she might exercise with her husband. She put herself in charge of his finances. She wrote out a set of "Rules for my Guidance as a Wife," which included "Be prepared at any moment to follow him at an hour's notice and rough it like a man" and "Hide his faults from *everyone*, and back him up through every difficulty and trouble; but with his peculiar temperament advocate peace whenever it is consistent with his honour before the world."

Isabel never veered from these or any of her other rules. The going could not have been easy. Marriage did not in the least stop her husband from expressing his heretical opinions, including the view that polygamy was not an immoral arrangement and that missionaries in Africa "did more harm than good"; nor did it stop him from conducting research, presumably first-hand, into male brothels in India, from living well in excess of their income, from drinking heavily (he is credited with turning Swinburne into an alcoholic), or from travelling wherever the prospect of action beckoned. "Pay, pack, and follow" was his familiar command when it was time for her to break camp yet again. He once said that she could "make a home of a coal hole."

Isabel, however, was not quite your usual homemaker. Life with Burton must have been hugely liberating for a sheltered Victorian woman with a longing for adventure. A lover of animals, she kept a panther cub as a pet when they lived in Damascus. Her husband used her as his agent by sending her into harems to gather gossip and other information. She nursed the sick in poor countries and was not in the least daunted by the most horrendous squalor. She wrote for the British press, often to spread her husband's views. In Arab costume, she was taken by the natives to be her husband's son or groom. Once, when the couple were out among the Bedouin, Burton suggested to her that they show that the English could ride. "So I gave my usual answer," she notes. "'All right! Whenever you lead I'll follow.' "

Up to a point, anyway. In Burton's last years his interest in erotology—he translated the "Kama Sutra" and the unexpurgated "Arabian Nights"—earned him the additional title, among his enemies, of Dirty Dick. Burton undertook this work to make money, which it did, and to *épater* the prudes, which it also did. But it cannot have been easy for Isabel, with her earnest Catholicism and general uprightness, to accept his pottering about on the edges of pornography. And, with her husband an established sex expert, people must have wondered whether Burton had, so to say, used his conjugal bed to kitchen-test all those Eastern configurations.

Isabel saw it as her job to protect her husband's reputation in his death as in his life. When she destroyed some of his papers, including his work on a translation of yet another porno classic, "The Scented Garden," and an essay attacking the Jews, she did so mindful of what would best represent him to posterity. Out of deference to her unbounded solicitude, Burton allowed a priest to give him the last rites of a Church that he had shown very little interest in during his lifetime.

After Richard's death, Isabel designed for him a stone mausoleum in the shape of a desert tent. While it is not so grand as the Albert Memorial, it is still one of the notable monstrosities of Victorian taste, complete with camel bells to tinkle in the wind. At Isabel's death, five and a half years after her husband's, her body was interred in this mausoleum, though in a coffin simpler, and placed lower, than her husband's. An odd couple, in some ways a mad couple, they had only each other, but in the end it was quite enough. ◆

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Farming of Bones, by Edwidge Danticat (Soho; $23). The crux of this vivid novel is a horrific event: the 1937 massacre of Haitians—many of them sugarcane cutters or domestic workers—who lived on the Dominican side of the island. In this steely, nuanced tale, Amabelle, a Haitian servant who in childhood watched her parents drown, sees everything she loves swept away again; it's a testament to Danticat's skill that Amabelle's musical, sorrowing voice never falters, even during her stark descriptions of the bloodbath.

Let Nothing You Dismay, by Mark O'Donnell (Knopf; $22). Baby-faced Tad has Christmas jimjams. He has accepted seven invitations for a single day, and each party promises poison: for starters, there's brunch at the home of his brother, who has recently lobotomized himself. O'Donnell's talent is for slow-motion mayhem; the only hitch in this uproarious tale is that if Tad were as quick on the draw as he's depicted, he might be less of a noodle and more like—well, the author, who's one of the funniest writers around.

The Book of Blam, by Aleksandar Tišma, translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Michael Henry Heim (Harcourt Brace; $23). Miroslav Blam, wandering along what was once Jew Street in his home town, remembers his parents, his sister, and his friends, murdered in the Second World War. Blam is alive, but his wife is sleeping with the collaborator Predrag Popadić, who, we learn, has also seduced Blam's mother, taken his father's job, fathered his wife's child, and saved Blam's life. Tišma has written a quiet book, but his hero, a survivor unsure that he has survived, is a startling, extraordinary creation.

American Beach, by Russ Rymer (HarperCollins; $25). Why would MaVynee Betsch, a former opera diva and black aristocrat, give away her stake in the family fortune to live on the beach where her great-grandfather helped found a resort for blacks in the Jim Crow South? Using Betsch's story as a wedge, the author pries open the inner workings of a Florida community struggling to maintain its sense of self in the face of encroaching development and inner divisions. Rymer has a journalist's gift for telling a story without violating the mystery at its center; he makes no effort to simplify the byzantine complexities of Southern race relations, and his book is the better for it.

Prozac Diary, by Lauren Slater (Random House; $21.95). The author of this thoughtful, lucid book was among the first patients to be given Prozac, and she has now been on it, almost without interruption, for ten years. She credits the drug with enabling her, after an incapacitating adolescence, not only to taste and see but to complete a doctorate; marry; and, as director of a clinic, be useful. But she also ponders what it means to one's sense of self to be more or less permanently under the influence of a personality- (and libido-) altering drug.

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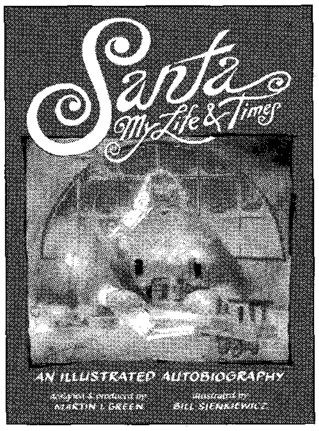
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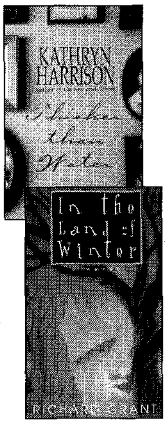
Richard Grant weaves together the many diverse threads of this particular time of year—the bleakness and beauty, the insanity and the magic, the bitter darkness and dazzling light—and he creates a rich tapestry of alternate American life. ***IN THE LAND OF WINTER*** is a contemporary fable about a young Maine witch and her desperate struggle to win her stolen daughter back from an unyielding government bureaucracy during the highest holiday season in Christendom. This novel of official intolerance and a mother's steadfast devotion not only affects us on a deeply emotional level, it offers us much food for thought in a time of joyful, selfless giving.



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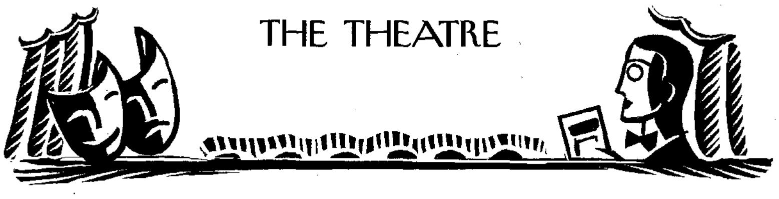


THE THEATRE

UNEMBRACEABLE YOU

Jazz memories and feckless adolescent comedy on the Upper West Side.

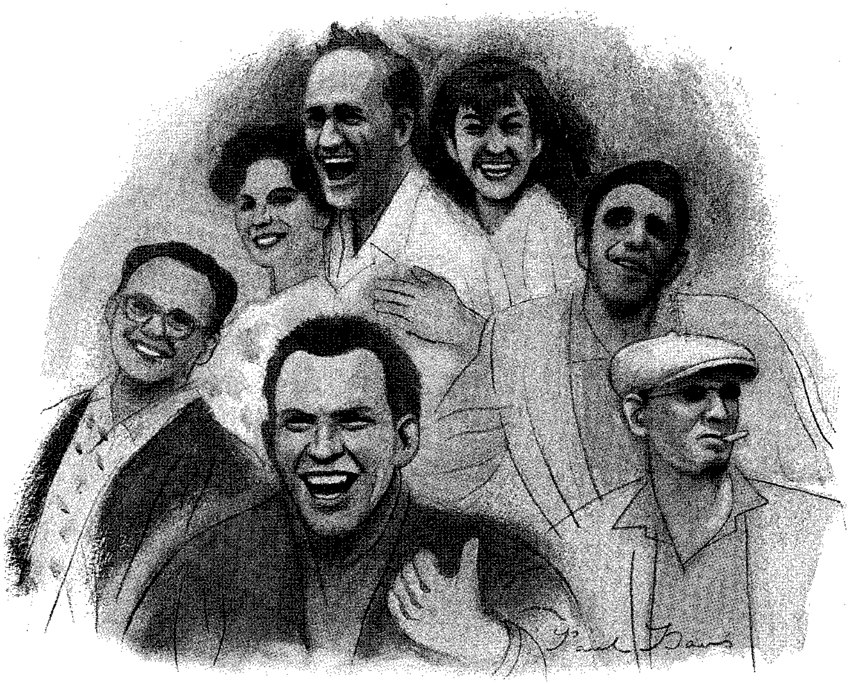
BY JOHN LAHR

"IF you see me up there on the stand smiling, I'm lost!" the legendary jazz pianist Earl Hines once said. Oblivion—its swinging ecstasy and its punishing separation—is really the subject of Warren Leight's astute, elegiac play "Side Man," which has transferred to the John Golden Theatre from the Roundabout. It is a son's bittersweet homage to his crazy, warring parents and to the mysteries of the jazz life that divided them. Leight's father played trumpet for Buddy Rich in the fifties, and before that, like Gene, the trumpeter father in the play, for Claude Thornhill's big band. The story, a collection of memories narrated by Gene's wry twenty-nine-year-old son, Clifford (a charming, laid-back Christian Slater), unfolds when Clifford returns after a five-year absence to the "Zip Code of his youth," which was 10025, on New York's Upper West Side. First he has dinner with his mother, Terry (Wendy Makkena), who is a dishevelled apparition of regret ("I had a dream you saw him," she tells Clifford about Gene. "And you know what pissed me off—he hasn't aged. He'll never age—nothing gets to him"); then he goes to hear his father at the Melody Lounge. In the two hours between the play's early scenes, when Clifford enters Gene's crepuscular haunt, and the poignant finale, when he struggles through an awkward reunion with him in between sets, the chaotic family history passes in scenic shorthand before him and the audience.

"I walk in and I hear him before I see him," Clifford tells us. "Playing a ballad. . . . My father's voice." For the son, the father is more a sound than a presence. Gene (played by Frank Wood with superb passive-aggressive vacancy) speaks articulately in his art but is a kind of zombie at home. Although he is, as he says, "in the twilight of a mediocre career," the play explores the paradox of artistic command and private incompetence which so bewilders his son and has driven his wife to drink. The one way Clifford can get to his father is to get with the music. "The only thing I had going for me was bringing the guys here to see my old man play trumpet," he says of his high-school days. "I was drinking screwdrivers at the bar from the time I was thirteen." In one of the play's best scenes, Clifford—who is named for the great jazz trumpeter Clifford Brown—shows us his father and his cronies Ziggy (Michael Mastro) and Al (Joseph Lyle Taylor) listening to a tape of Brown's rendition of "A Night in Tunisia," silently blissing out to Brown's virtuoso riffs. "When he's up there, blowing, he's totally in touch with everything that's going on around him," Clifford says of Gene, a balding, frizzy-haired hipster who has Art Carney's dim look and slow take. "I used to wonder how he could sense everything while he was blowing, and almost nothing when he wasn't." But at the end of the set, as Gene bends the moody notes to "It Never Entered My Mind," Clifford gets a sense of the heroic, rather than of hurt. "They played not for fame, and certainly not for money," he says. "They played for each other. To swing. To blow. Night after night, they were just burning brass. Oblivious."

Although "Side Man" is ostensibly about jazz, it also dramatizes the emotional consequences of being "gone." Clifford, through the humorous retelling of his parents' tale, both addresses and repairs their virtual absence from his childhood. He is a biographer of sorts, whose combined detachment from and involvement in the family triangle is mirrored by the director Michael Mayer's expert staging, as Clifford moves in and out of the remembered scenes, alternately commenting on and participating in their chaos. The son is the symbolic as well as the actual agent of his parents' survival: his memory gives them life, a kind of artificial respiration which saves them for *him*. In their apartment, cluttered with tchotchkes and records and hand-me-down furniture, Terry and Gene emerge as ghostly figures. They are not all there. Terry disappears on benders and in paranoid rages; Gene is so vague and forgetful that he has to leave notes to himself to remember to take a shower. The mother seems unable to think, the father unable to feel. "Nothing gets you!" Terry shouts at him after one violent outburst. "It's good for a family to have rituals," Clifford says to the audience. In this house, the parents' job is to fight like banshees, and the son's job is to hold the family together. At one point, while Clifford is nursing his mother through yet another breakdown, Terry tells him, "It wasn't right that you had to do this. You know what your father said: 'That's why you have kids, Terry, so they'll take care of you.'" Clifford is not only his parents' caretaker but their mediator. "You always figure something out. You're the Red Cross," Gene tells him, unable to cope with Terry's collapse. Indeed, the son subdues his mother and stops her from throwing herself off a window ledge. He even has to negotiate his father's moving out of the house in order to keep his mother from being institutionalized upstate (she has no place to go but can't live with Gene). "That night, at midnight, I drove him over to Ziggy's. I don't think he had any idea what was going on. It was like moving a cat," Clifford says.

In the end, Clifford is left contemplating his father and the music he makes. "These guys are not even an endangered species anymore," he says. "There are no more big bands, no more territory bands. No more nonets, or tentets. No more sixty weeks a year on the road." He adds, "When they go, that'll be it." In this beautiful, low-key soliloquy, Clifford mourns the passing of both his musical and his family inheritance. "Side Man," which is history told through a string of anecdotes, delivers more moment-to-moment passion than narrative depth; but Leight's sly design succeeds in trapping the heart's raw music—something as wild and haunting as a good trumpet solo.



Taking a solo: Christian Slater, in "Side Man," tells bittersweet tales of growing up among jazz musicians. Frank Wood (above Slater) is his trumpeter father.

PAUL DAVIS

KENNETH LONERGAN'S highly praised "This Is Our Youth," at Second Stage Theatre, is about another style of Upper West Side adolescent heartbreak. The feckless Warren Straub (Mark Ruffalo, who postures like a denizen of "Wayne's World") enters the "grunge palace" studio apartment of his drug-dealing twenty-year-old sidekick Dennis Ziegler (Mark Rosenthal) literally carrying his childhood baggage—a valise full of mint-condition toys and other collectibles. Warren has been kicked out of his father's house; at Dennis's, he proceeds to throw a football, score a joint, and attempt to figure out what to do with fifteen thousand dollars he has stolen from his father, "arguably the most dangerous lingerie manufacturer in the world." It's 1982, and Lonergan's characters are meant to be the by-products of a morally bankrupt culture. They have money; they have a certain raggedy charm; and, when pressed, they can muster a kind of vocabulary. What they don't have in life is a reason to be; what they don't have onstage, despite their comic banter, is a way of compelling our attention.

Lonergan, whose script shows real theatrical promise, is good on surface behavior but not on subtext. Everything that is psychologically important to the characters happens offstage; while the director, Mark Brokaw, works hard to keep the eye engaged, the mind wanders. From crude, incidental exchanges we learn that Warren's sister has been murdered, that his father beats him, and that the megalomaniacal, hectoring Dennis ("I'm twice the Jew you'll *ever* be. I'm like a Jewish *god*. I'm like—*Jew*lius Caesar") has a famous artist father with prostate problems and an overbearing social-worker mother. "She's like a bleeding-heart dominatrix with, like, a *hairdo*," Warren explains to his nubile date, Jessica (the excellent Missy Yager). Dennis, who conducts a perpetual phone war with his girlfriend, excuses his ranting habit as a need to keep his mother at bay—a maneuver that, from a theatrical point of view, would be far better shown than told. As is de rigueur in tales of big-city adolescence, the play meanders through a botched drug deal, a comic seduction (Warren uses some of his stolen cash to take a suite at the Plaza and bed Jessica), and even the offstage overdose of one of the drug dealers. However, for insights into the dead heart of the rich urban young, nothing in this overlong play beats a conversation I recently had with a teen-ager who, when she was asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, replied, "Divorced, with two kids, living on Central Park West." ♦

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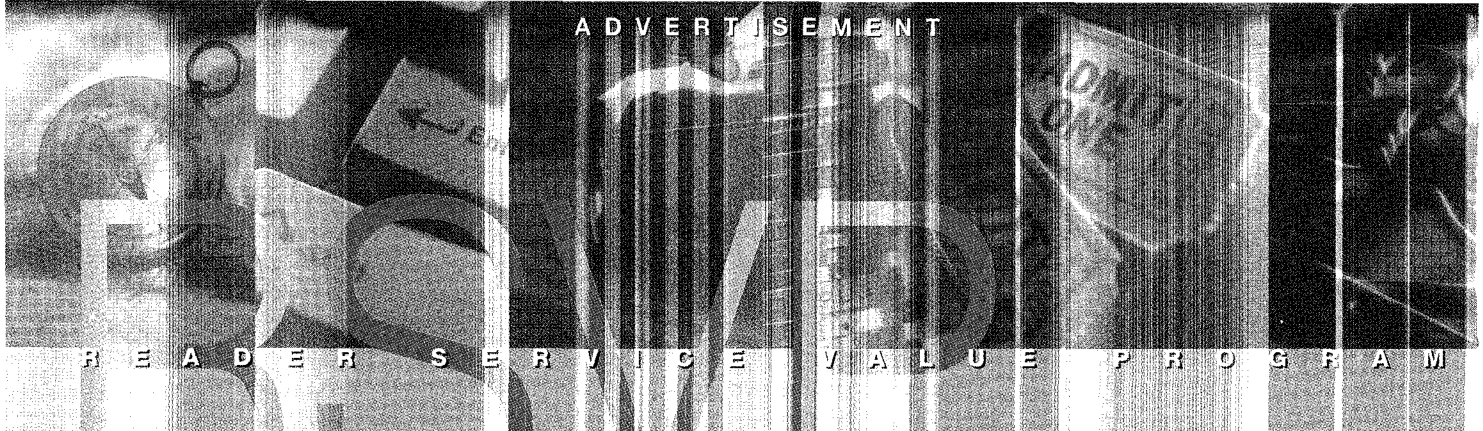

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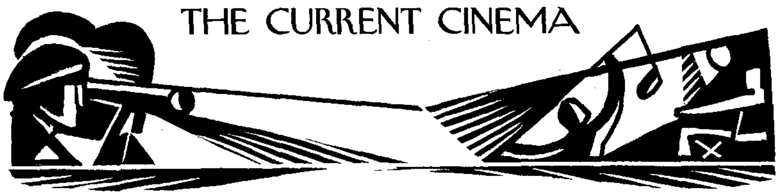


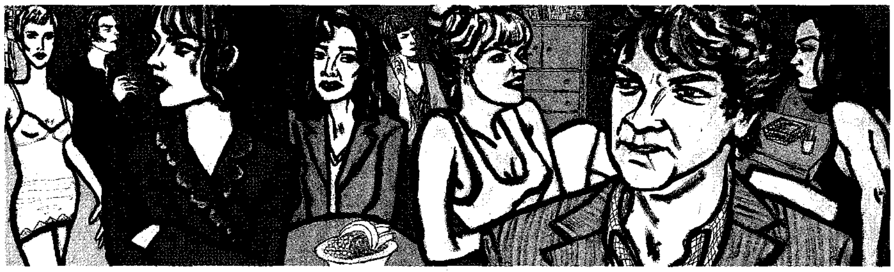
THE CURRENT CINEMA

DYING FOR IT

Dreams of doom from Woody Allen and Martin Brest.

BY ANTHONY LANE

NEAR the beginning of the new Woody Allen movie, "Celebrity," a journalist named Lee (Kenneth Branagh), who specializes in writing about film, interviews a movie star named Nicole (Melanie Griffith). After a brief cautionary exchange with her press agent, Lee drives Nicole, in his own Aston Martin, to the house where she grew up. Sidling past the old lady who owns the place, they go upstairs to the bedroom. This, says Nicole, is where "I used to lie on my bed naked and watch my body develop." The journalist makes a move, which the star, who is married, gently rebuffs. Intercourse, she makes clear, is not in the cards. Then she unzips his pants.



"Celebrity" 's classy cast, most of whom Branagh, the journalist Lothario, lusts after.

JAYA MICELI

There are many things to be said about this sequence, but you could not, with a clear conscience, call it cinéma vérité. "Celebrity" was shot in black and white by Ingmar Bergman's former cameraman, Sven Nykvist, but this is not one of those occasions on which monochrome denotes implacable authenticity; if anything, the absence of color suggests, as it did in "Manhattan" and "Stardust Memories," the lingering presence of a dream—in Allen's case, a fairly moist one. He must know what public relations consists of in the movie business; he must realize that someone of Lee's ilk would be lucky to snatch twenty minutes of Nicole's time, in the company of five other hacks and a vase of odorless flowers, in a ninth-floor hotel room that had been hired for the bleak monstrosity of a junket. Nicole would coyly concur when Lee, with outspoken audacity, asked whether her latest role had been one of her most challenging to date; but that would be it. Not only would she not go down on him; she would not even stand *up* for him. If he laid a finger on her, Nicole's publicist would spring out of the corner like a winged fury and ban him from seeing any motion picture, anywhere, ever again. So why does Woody Allen pretend otherwise?

Three possible reasons come to mind. First, Allen doesn't get out much, so the ways of the world are largely a matter of guesswork. (This presents a serious handicap to his movie, which purports to satirize certain excesses of the modern media; heaven knows, these are real enough, but Allen has to invent some more along the way. Would a TV interviewer really waft her microphone into Jean-Georges at lunchtime and grill the customers on air? Do book critics still wear bow ties?) Second, if the story is to show any muscle, Allen needs his hero to interact with famous people, rather than dawdle bashfully behind the red rope. Third—and this may be more of a concealed instinct than a conscious plan—the director needs to

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make it clear that, if we're going to compile league tables on the subject, Bill Clinton should rank as only the second-most-fellatio-fixated middle-aged male in the United States. Viewers of "Celebrity" may not know where to look as Bebe Neuwirth, playing a hooker, gives Judy Davis a practical in deep throat. Each woman has a banana, and Neuwirth chokes on hers. The scene struck me as rife with vengeance: Allen seems to be paying his female characters back for old, unspecified but rankling crimes. Would Annie Hall have submitted to such treatment?

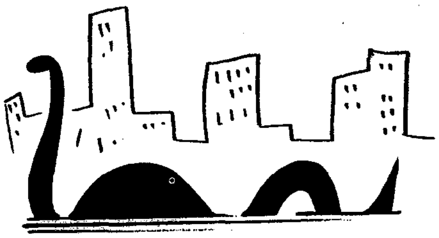
There is, of course, a noble Swiftian tradition of men who grow wrathful and scurrilous with the years; the trouble is that offensiveness seems to jar Allen's artistry and throw it off track. "Celebrity" traces the doomed desires of Lee as he cannons from one woman to another—from Melanie Griffith to Charlize Theron (a supermodel) and on to Famke Janssen (a book editor, and more beautiful than the model) and Winona Ryder (an actress), and then to nobody at all. These are all smart dames, so one wonders why none of them turn to him and say, "What's with the bad Woody Allen impersonation?" Did Branagh do it deliberately, and, if so, why didn't Woody stop him? On the other side of the plot, we follow the upward curve of Lee's ex-wife, Robin (Judy Davis), who calms her quailing nerves and finds true love with Tony (Joe Mantegna). As ever, the cast has class, and is rounded off by a neat turn from Leonardo DiCaprio, who travels way out of character to play a feral, hotel-trashing movie brat. As ever, too, there is the pure dramatic economy with which Allen, more deftly than any of his peers, marks the passage of time: we sense the characters' spirits (not merely their fortunes) swell and crash like waves.

Yet "Celebrity" fails to collect itself—to gather to what I am reluctant to call a head. Robin finds happiness, Lee loses it, and the symmetry should satisfy; but this picture, like "Deconstructing Harry," leaves you with an impression of bitty desperation, as if Allen had determined, with laudable honesty, to confront his demons, only to have them turn around and bite. "Ask not for whom the bell tolls or, to put it more accurately, for whom the toilet flushes," Lee says. It's a dirty joke and, by Allen's empyrean standard, not a very funny one; like everybody else—not just the famous—he is stricken by the prospect of life's going down the tubes, and he is taking that terror out on his own characters. "Celebrity" may be glamorous to look at, but it's not a pretty sight.

I HAD heard vile rumors that "Meet Joe Black" ran for almost three hours. The rumors were true, but let's be fair: what matters is not how long a film is but how long it *seems*, and "Meet Joe Black" doesn't seem like a three-hour film at all. It seems like a ten-hour film.

Directed by Martin Brest, who, on the evidence of "Scent of a Woman," has always liked it deep and slow, the new picture stars Brad Pitt as Death. This must be part of some secret educational venture, devised jointly by the leading Hollywood studios, in which their shiniest stars will assume the role of abstract nouns. Already in the pipeline are Demi Moore as Rationality, Jim Carrey as Peace, and Tom Cruise as Personal Growth. Pitt is not dead at the start of the film: he is a young man just arrived in New York, who meets Susan (Claire Forlani) in a coffee shop, falls in love with her, and steps into traffic, which serves him right for failing to get her phone number. What happens next—and follow me closely here—is that Pitt's body, still fresh, is adopted as a disguise by Death, who has come to claim the soul of Susan's dad, Bill (Anthony Hopkins). Why Death should choose this particular shell is unclear, unless he is a kind of spectral Emma Woodhouse who likes to bring pretty people together.

And, boy, are they pretty. Forlani has the almond eyes and catlike demeanor that in certain countries would cause religions to be established in her name, while Brad gazes out from the screen, undistracted by such fripperies as plot, in order to catch the personal attention of fifty million molten female viewers. I always imagined Death as a figure of suave ennui—an Alan Rickman type—but for some reason Pitt plays him as a jerky, robotic goof, who licks peanut butter off a spoon like Tigger eating Roo's breakfast malt. His suits droop off him as if the pockets were lined with lead, and you keep wanting him to puff his silly blond fringe out of the way; there is honest panic in his eyes as the big speeches approach, and he pronounces "Machiavellian" as if Machiavelli were one of tonight's specials. Mind you, all the performers are bowed down by the sort of dialogue which explains the popularity of document shredders. "I want you to levitate," Bill tells Susan, oblivious of the fact that they are both in a helicopter. "I want you to sing with rapture and dance like a dervish." Even more impractical are the wise words of his thrusting underling Drew (Jake Weber): "You can't unscramble scrambled eggs. The train's left the station and you're on board. . . . Wake up and smell the thorns." Smell? Thorns?



Bill is a widowed media magnate on the verge of sixty-five, with a house the size of Maine, but I fail to see how he made his billions: nobody who says "Forget your head and listen to your heart" has ever earned more than fifty grand a year. Hopkins has entered tycoon territory before, when he prowled the stage as the wolfish Lambert LeRoux in "Pravda," but this is a new departure; Bill is a nice Rupert Murdoch, which is a contradiction in terms. He foils Drew's plans, he enjoys his final birthday party, and then he dies, taking rather longer over it than James Cameron took to sink a ship. Does Death allow everyone such a stylishly long goodbye, or does money punch its weight even in the afterlife? I have no idea what this movie is trying to tell us, or sell us, but, whatever it is, most people at the première were gaga for it, and I had a sudden prickle of dread: we could be in for another case of the Gumps. "Meet Joe Black" is endless, bewildering, starved of logic, and, if you stand back from it, something of a joke. In short, it feels like death. ◆

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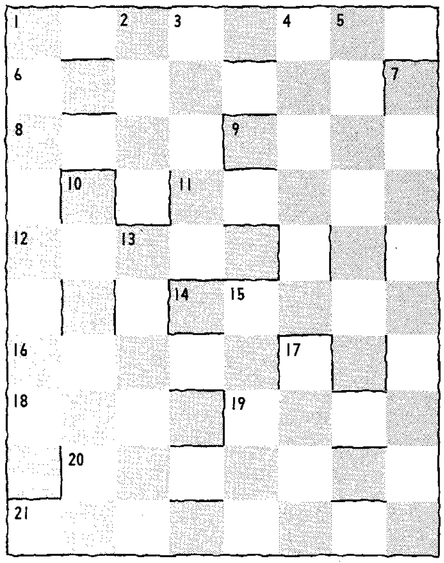

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1 Caveman-era scholar has attitude (5,3)
6 Accept a welcome with love (5,2)
8 "Cabaret" actress involved in theatricalization (4)
9 Little guy in open convertible (4)
11 Occupation rated poorly (5)
12 Get rid of all competition for Daniel? (5)
14 Pares bananas with harpoon (5)
16 "Jumping Rope"—a stage show (5)
18 Intelligent questions from the speaker (4)
19 Long needled tree (4)
20 They hold 250 amperes (1-6)
21 Yokel pursuing objective: "Be very thorough" (2,3,3)

DOWN

1 Cook allows bad dish for the first course (5,4)
2 Grainy food for zoo's inhabitant (4)
3 Playing a note—wow (5)
4 Relaxed with a guy (2,4)
5 Nothing unusual in cheerful greeting (4,3)
7 Gravely, I approach egg container? (2,7)
10 Film about crooked policemen stirred cops' ire (7)
13 While climbing, a peasant swallows cold soda (6)
15 A parish's leader embraced by friend of the church (5)
17 Crashed Milo's fancy car (4)

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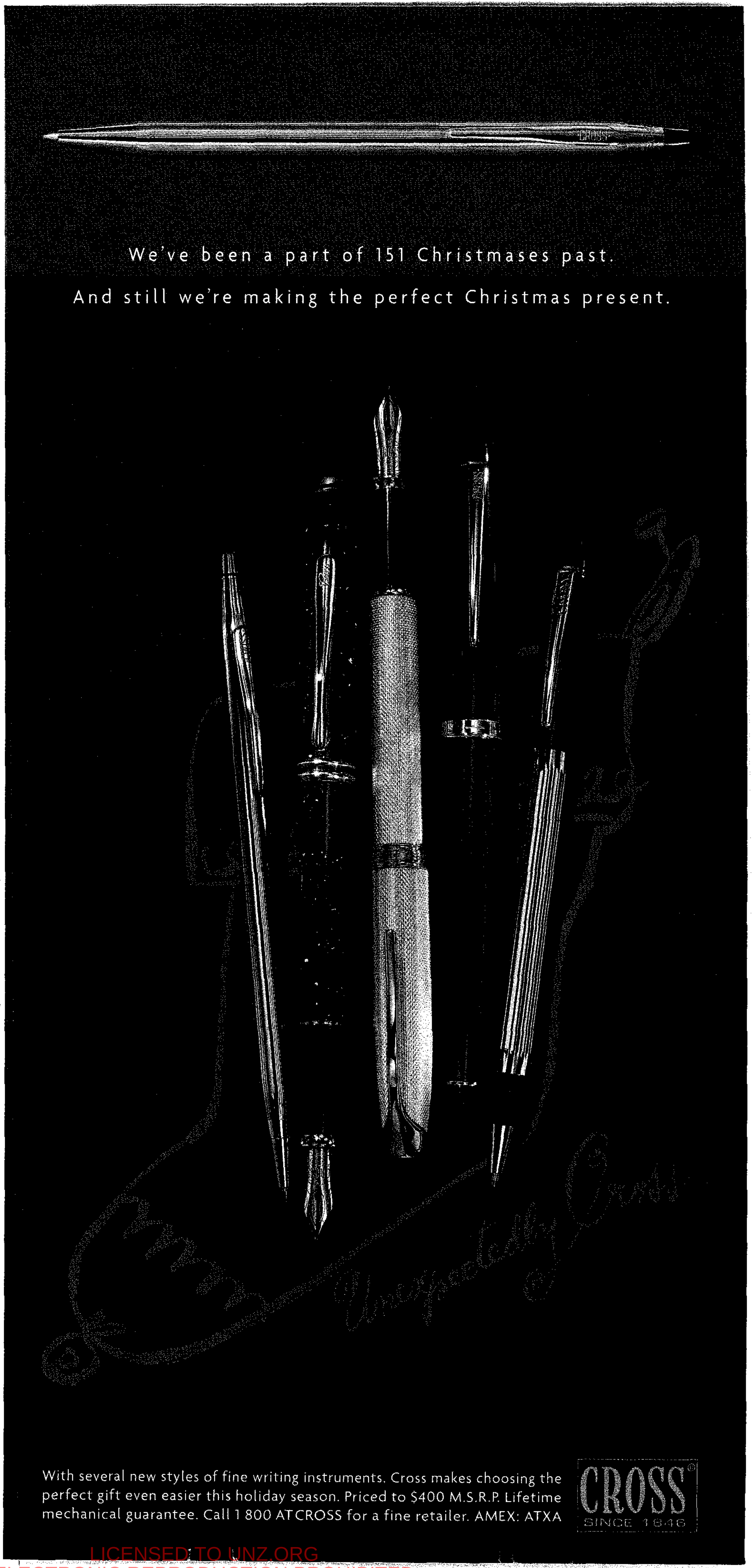
The solution to puzzle No. 66 appears on page 112. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.



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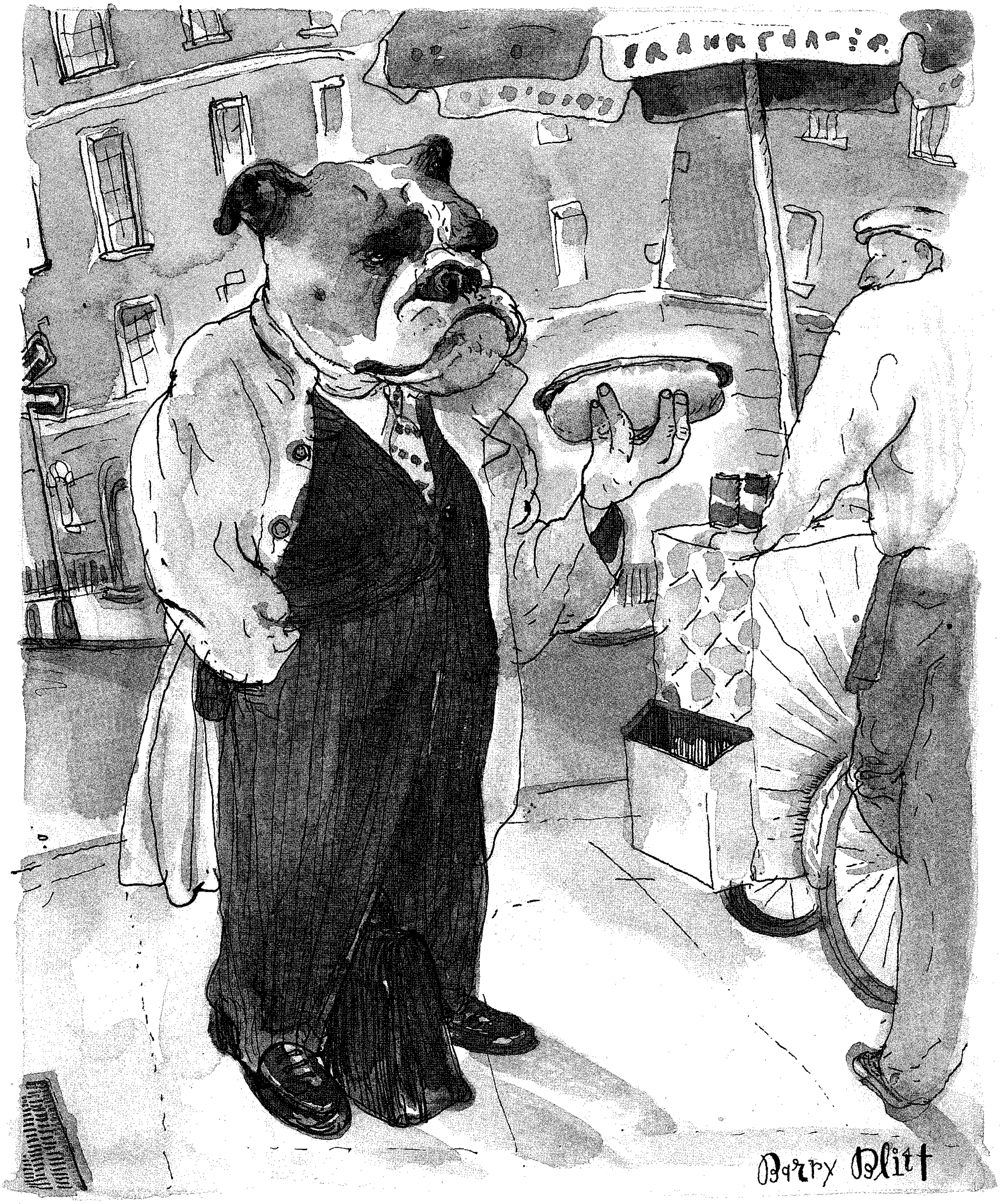
DOG EAT DOG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